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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dissertation

A HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN HOLY APOSTOLIC ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

(1888-1944)

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

1974

Approved
by

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Professor of Church History

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In 1972, when embarking upon a study of Armenian Church history in the United States, I was handicapped by the lack of a comprehensive survey of Armenian Church history comparable to the excellent monographs on different denominations in the United States. This gap became more of a reason to prepare a study to fill this lacuna, in part at least despite the magnitude of the undertaking which became clearer as research progressed. Many organizations and individuals have facilitated the writing of this dissertation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.................................... ii

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION............................ 1

A. The Problem of the Dissertation.................. 1

B. Sources of the Study............................. 3

C. Limitations...................................... 5

D. Previous Research in the Field................... 6

E. Method of the Dissertation....................... 7

CHAPTER II. FROM NOAH'S ARK TO AMERICA.............. 9

A. The Armenians: History at a Glance............... 9

B. The Armenian Church: A Short Survey.............. 13

C. The Pioneers (1618-1882)......................... 24

1. Protestant Missionary Influence.............. 29

2. The Students................................. 32

3. The Merchants................................ 34

4. The Workers.................................. 35

5. Extent of Armenian Immigration Prior to 1882 37

D. Armenian Immigration to the United States: Causes and Effects (1882-1944)................... 40

1. The Political Oppression..................... 42

2. Religious Persecution........................ 45

3. The Economic Motivation...................... 47

4. "America Fever" 48
5. The Arrival in America 49
6. The End of the Open Door 51

E. Causes for Domestic Problems 52
1. Armenian Colonies and Settlements 53
2. Language Barriers 55
3. The Economic Factor 56
4. Living Environment 57
5. Religious Differences 59

F. Patterns of Adjustment 60
1. Economic Adjustment 61
2. Family and Related Problems 62
3. Compromise with America 64

G. Immigrant Organizations and Community Life 66
1. Armenian Political Parties 67
2. The Armenian Language Press 72
3. Societies and Associations 76
4. Armenian Language Schools 78
5. Armenian Restaurants and Coffeehouses 80

H. Summary and Conclusion 81

CHAPTER III. SPIRITUAL PASTORATE IN AMERICA (1888-1898) 85

A. Need for a Native Church 87
1. The Formation of the Armenian Club (1888) 88
2. Letter to Constantinople 92
3. Brothers at Opposite Poles 93

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B. The First Superior: Father Hovsēp' Sarajian (1889-1893).. 95

  1. The Celebration of the First Armenian Divine Liturgy in America................. 97

  2. The Formation of the First Church Trustees 98

  3. Need of Pastoral Visitation............... 100

  4. Building the First Armenian Church (1891). 102

  5. Spiritual Leadership in Dispute: Resignation (1893)............................... 105

C. The Second Superior: Father Maghak'ia Dērounian (1894-1897)............................... 108

  1. Election and Arrival...................... 109

  2. "Friends of Armenia"...................... 110

  3. The Transferral of the Spiritual Jurisdiction from Constantinople to Echmiadzin... 112

  4. Unsuccessful Pastorate.................... 115

D. The Third Superior: Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian (1897-1898)............................... 116

  1. Beginning Amidst Obstacles................ 118

  2. Rapproachment with the Armenian Protestants 120

  3. The Rift Between Pastor and Church Trustees 124

  4. The Finale................................ 131

E. The Armenian Church in Providence: The Beginnings (1897-1899)........................ 136

F. Other Parishes................................ 143

G. Summary and Conclusion........................ 144

CHAPTER IV. THE FOUNDATION OF THE DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (1898-1906)... 147

A. Start of the Diocesan Organization: First Primate, Bishop Hovsēp' Sarajian.............. 149

1. The Re-Organization of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour in Worcester............... 150

2. First Clergy Conference (1901)............ 151

3. First Diocesan Convention (1902).......... 153

B. Polish Appeal to the Armenian Church.......... 157

C. Mission in the Name of God and Country........ 159

1. The Confiscation of Armenian Church Properties in Armenia (1903).................... 161

2. Archbishop Sarajian, Delegate-at-Large.... 164

D. Church and Politics: The Critics of the Primate.. 167

E. Developments in the Church.................... 170

F. Expansion of Churches......................... 174

1. Saint John Chrysostom Church, New York, New York.................................. 176

2. Holy Trinity Church, Fresno, California... 179

G. Summary and Conclusion........................ 184

CHAPTER V. TRYING YEARS (1906-1913)................. 186

A. Period of Locum-Tenens: Father Bōghos Kaft'anian (1906-1908).................................. 187

B. Short-Lived Primacy of Archbishop Eznig Abahouni (1908, September-October)...................... 190

C. Dark Events (1908-1911)....................... 196

D. Hope and Disillusionment: Bishop Moushegh Seropian.. 200

    1. The Election of the Primate: Archbishop Seropian.................................. 201
    2. The Aftermath.............................. 204
    3. Refusal of Confirmation by Holy Ēchmiadzin. 208
    4. Relations Between Ēchmiadzin and Cilicia: A Background............................... 211
    5. The Deepening of the Controversy........... 213
E. Decline of the Diocese......................... 216
    1. Catholicossal Election and the American Delegation................................. 217
    2. Decay of Clerical Standards................ 220
F. The Plenipotentiary Delegate of Holy Ēchmiadzin: Archbishop Kēork Iwt'iwjian (1913)............. 221
    1. Call to a Mission.......................... 222
    2. Negotiations and Elections................. 224
G. Expansion of Churches.......................... 227
    1. Holy Cross Church, Union City, New Jersey... 228
    2. Saint Gregory Church, Fowler, California.... 232
    3. Saint Mary Church, Yettem, California....... 234
H. Summary and Conclusion......................... 235

CHAPTER VI. NATIONALISM VS. THE PRIMACY (1913-1917)... 238
A. A New Primate: Father Arsēn Vehouni (1913-1917). 239
B. The Newly-Elected Primate at Work.............. 240
    1. The Reorganization of the Office of the Diocese.................................... 241
    2. In Search of Peace and Order................ 242
    3. The Problem of Unruly Priests............... 246

4. The Primate and His Critics................ 248

C. The Armenian National Defense Union of America.. 250

D. The Last Acts of the Primate.................. 253

1. The Approaching Storm....................... 254

2. Primate Vehouni with President Wilson....... 255

E. Schism in the Church........................... 257

1. Prelude to Impeachment...................... 257

2. The Confrontation........................... 259

F. Expansion of Churches.......................... 263

1. Holy Translators Church, Providence, Rhode Island.................................... 264

2. Saint Vartanants' Church, Lowell, Massachusetts............................... 266

3. Saint Peter's Church, Troy, New York........ 268

G. Summary and Conclusion........................ 270

CHAPTER VII. THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY (1917-1921)......... 272

A. An Historical Background....................... 274

B. Locum-Tenens: Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian (April-July, 1917)............................. 279

1. Maneuverings of the Ex-Primate.............. 282

2. Efforts Toward Reconciliation............... 285

3. Relief Amidst Chaos......................... 287

C. The Locum-Tenens: Father Shahē Kasbarian (1917-1920)................................... 289

1. The Transferral of Administration........... 290

2. The Suspension of Vehouni................... 293

D. Tashnag Attempts to Dominate the Church......... 294

E. Quest for Ecclesiastical Unity.................. 296

  1. Arrival of the Plenipotentiary: Bishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian, May 13, 1920........... 297

  2. The End of the Schism........................ 298

  3. Epilogue..................................... 302

F. Expansion of Churches........................... 305

G. Summary and Conclusion.......................... 309

CHAPTER VIII. TRADITIONALISM VS. LIBERALISM (1921-1928) 311

A. Historical Background........................... 313

B. Ēchmiadzin Under Soviet Rule (1921-1928)........ 318

C. Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian: Interim Locum-Tenens: (July 20, 1920-March 7, 1921).................. 328

D. The New Primate: Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian (1921-1928)........................ 330

E. First Efforts Toward Reorganization of the Diocese.. 334

F. Concerns of a Troubled Church................... 341

  1. Steps Toward Renewal......................... 343

  2. The Transferral of the Diocesan Center from Worcester to Boston (1923)................. 346

G. The Deepening Rift.............................. 348

  1. Controversy Over the Altar Stone............ 349

  2. The Drafting of a New Diocesan Constitution. 352

  3. Description of the Revised Constitution..... 357

H. Division of the Jurisdiction of the Diocese in North America (1927)........................... 360

1. Transfer of Eastern Diocesan Headquarters from Boston to New York (1927).............. 361

2. Creation of the Western Diocese in California (1927)............................ 362

3. The Primacy of Bishop Karekin Khach'adourian (1928-1932)................................ 366

I. Resignation of Primate Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian.. 370

J. Expansion of Churches........................... 375

1. Holy Cross Church, Los Angeles, California.. 376

2. Holy Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts.. 379

3. Holy Resurrection Church, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin.................................. 383

4. Saint Sahag and Saint Mesrob Church, Reedley, California......................... 383

5. Saint Mesrob Church, Racine, Wisconsin...... 385

6. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, Chicago, Illinois........................... 388

7. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania................. 390

K. Summary and Conclusion.......................... 394

CHAPTER IX. THE INTERIM YEARS (1928-1931)............. 396

A. Soviet-Ēchmiadzin Relations in a New Phase...... 398

B. Period of Locum-Tenens I: Father Serovpē Nershabouh (1928-1930).......................... 407

1. Biographical Notes.......................... 408

2. A Survey of Diocesan Life and Affairs....... 412

C. Period of Locum-Tenens II: Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian (1930-1931)........................... 415

1. Biographical Notes.......................... 416

2. Ineffectual Times for the Diocese.......... 417

D. Expansion of Churches.......................... 419

1. Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, New York..... 420

2. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, Binghamton, New York......................... 422

3. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada................. 422

E. Summary and Conclusion.......................... 424

CHAPTER X. DIVISION IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (1931-1933)................................. 426

A. Relative Soviet Tolerance Toward Ēchmiadzin..... 427

B. The New Primate: Archbishop Ghewont Tourian (1931-1933)...................................... 430

C. Initial Steps Toward Diocesan Reorganization.... 435

D. Prelude to Division: Stages in a Drama......... 437

1. Armenian Memorial Day Controversy.......... 439

2. The "Smyrna Affair" Dispute................. 442

3. The Challenge to the Authority of the Primate.................................. 447

4. Crisis of the Armenian Tri-color........... 450

5. Assault on the Primate at Church Picnic..... 458

E. Division in the Armenian Church................. 462

1. Disruption of the Diocesan Convention, September 2-3, 1933........................ 463

2. Aftermath of the Diocesan Convention........ 467

3. Activities of the Dissidents............... 472

4. The Maxim Litvinoff Banquet................ 476

5. The Murder of Archbishop Tourian........... 478

F. Expansion of Churches........................... 485

1. Holy Ascension Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut................................ 486

2. Saint John the Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan.................................. 488

G. Summary and Conclusion.......................... 491

CHAPTER XI. ECCLESIASTICAL CRISIS AND SEARCH FOR UNITY (1933-1939).............................. 495

A. Situation in Ēchmiadzin......................... 497

B. Panic and Fanaticism in Church and Community in America...................................... 501

1. The Locum-Tenens: Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian (1933-1939).............................. 503

2. Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee........... 506

C. The Institutionalization of the Division of the Church.. 512

D. The Trial of the Nine.......................... 519

1. Pre-Trial Investigations.................... 520

2. Trial and Verdict........................... 526

E. The Aftermath: Days of Widespread Anarchy....... 539

F. A Mission to End the Ecclesiastical Crisis...... 548

1. Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian (1867-1952): Biographical Notes.......................... 549

2. The Plenipotentiary-at-Large................ 552

G. Roadblocks to Reconciliation................... 555

1. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian in America............ 556

2. The Position of the Diocese................. 560

3. The Attitude of the Dissident Group......... 567

4. Criticism and Praise of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.... 577

H. Toward Normalization of Church Affairs.... 579

I. Expansion of Churches.... 582

1. Holy Cross Church, Lawrence, Massachusetts.. 582

2. Saint James Church, Watertown, Massachusetts 585

3. Holy Cross Church, New York, New York.... 588

J. Summary and Conclusion.... 591

CHAPTER XII. THE END OF AN ERA (1939-1944).... 594

A. Ēchmiadzin and the Soviets: A Period of Relative Tolerance.... 596

B. The Election of the Primate: Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian.... 611

C. The New Locum-Tenens: Father Sion Manougian (March 1, 1939-May 9, 1939).... 619

D. Spiritual and Cultural Surge.... 623

1. Lousaworch'i Louma (Mite for the Illuminator) 624

2. Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy (Armenian Church) 625

3. Public Lecture Series.... 626

4. The Diocesan Auxiliary Committee.... 627

5. Annual Clergy Conference and Clergy Training Program.... 628

6. Views on Unity.... 631

E. Wartime Patriotic Impulse.... 632

1. Armenian War Relief Committee.... 635

2. David of Sasoun Tank Column Campaign.... 638

F. Mission and Vision.... 642

1. Cathedral and Diocesan House................ 643

2. Last Appeal for Unity........................ 645

G. The Ladder of Greatness...................... 648

1. Jubilee Celebrations........................ 649

2. Election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian as Catholicos of Cilicia....................... 651

3. Catholicos of Cilicia....................... 654

H. Expansion of Churches......................... 657

1. Holy Resurrection Church, New Britain, Connecticut................................. 659

2. Saint Leon's Church, Paterson, New Jersey... 660

3. Saint John's Church, West Allis, Wisconsin.. 663

I. Summary and Conclusion....................... 664

CHAPTER XIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION................. 667

A. The Church in Retrospect...................... 667

B. Conclusions: Crisis and the Church............ 673

1. National Character.......................... 674

2. Cultural Shock.............................. 676

3. The Leadership Factor....................... 676

4. Politicization of Community Life............ 683

5. The Confusion of National Destiny and Christian Mission........................... 685

6. Jurisdictional Conflicts and Hierarchical Centers.................................... 686

7. Structural-Organizational Problems.......... 687

8. Geographical Dispersion of American Settlements..................................... 687

9. The Multiple Waves of Migration and the Attendant Instability and Lag of the Americanization Process.......................... 688

10. The Persistence of Traditionalism............ 688

APPENDICES... 691

APPENDIX I- Table of Transliteration.................. 692

APPENDIX II- List of Churches in the Order of Their Consecration............................... 693

APPENDIX III- Sites, Dates and Presiding Churchmen of Diocesan Conventions (1902-1944).......... 696

BIBLIOGRAPHY... 698

ABSTRACT... 732

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.. 735

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem of the Dissertation

The problem of this dissertation is to trace the history of the establishment of the Armenian Church in the United States, from its initial stages in 1888 to 1944.

Coming to the United States, the Armenians had more obstacles to face than other, more firmly entrenched immigrant groups. These immigrants passionately adhered to their cultural heritage, to their ancient church that was oriented toward the East, and to a language that was hardly known or heard in this country. However, step by step the Armenians became part of America, and their church, hitherto intensely nationalistic, slowly took on a different aspect, maintaining her identity, but at the same time, contributing to and becoming an integral part of the social, cultural, and religious life of America.

An attempt will be made to see this development against the background of Armenian churchmen, ecclesiastical organizations, political parties, community life, hopes, and aspirations of the Armenian immigrants and their offspring, as they endeavored to adapt to the American scene.

This dissertation is important for several reasons.

1. Up to now there has not been any substantial work, either in Armenian or English, that provides a thorough presentation of the history of the Armenian Church in the United States. Yet the Armenians are a major ethnic and linguistic group in this land. This study intends, in part, to fill this lacuna in American Church historiography.

2. Many non-Armenians, as well as second and third generation Armenians, know very little about the history of the Armenian Church in the United States. This study will give the Armenian-Americans a better sense of their identity and will contribute to the religious history and ecumenical movement in the United States.

3. Much of what has been published about Armenians has been of a fragmentary or extremist nature, penned by pioneer sociologists, misguided journalists, and representatives of majority groups, at a time when the anti-foreign and racist mentality was at its peak in the United States. At the opposite pole stand the accounts of Armenian writers, often tinted with ultranationalistic, panegyric, and emotional emphases. A balanced treatment is clearly needed. With few exceptions, the Armenian Church has not, until very recently, received more than a token recognition by scholars, probably because it is considered a "young church" in the United States, and more than this, an immigrant church, whose language, up till now, has made it virtually unknown or unknowable to the vast majority of Americans.

4. Those members of the Armenian Church living in the United States constitute the most important segment of the church outside Armenia, Europe, and the Middle East. They already have given evidence for great potentialities for vigorous growth and for becoming a significant factor in the religious history of the American people, of which the Armenians have now become an integral part. For a true picture of the history of the larger Armenian Church in modern times, and of the direction in which she is going, it is essential that special attention be given to the history of her American segment.

5. It will perhaps not be amiss to say that the present study, although primarily concerned with an account of the church, will also shed light on the history of Armenian immigration and ethnic life in the United States. Such a history will thus provide data for some future sociological study of the Armenian community.

An examination of the lists of dissertations undertaken in religion indicates that no studies have been done which notably impinge upon this topic.

B. Sources of the Study

The research for this dissertation will be based on Diocesan and Government documents, Armenian language newspapers, letters, diaries, books, and pamphlets. Other sources of information will include lengthy interviews with clergymen, organization leaders, journalists, business and professional men active in Armenian-American church and community affairs, as well as the immigrants who came to this country and their offspring.

On Armenian immigration to the United States, most valuable among the United States Government Documents are various Congressional Documents concerning the Armenian immigrants and the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization.[1]

Statistics on parishes, priests, and church membership can be extracted from Parish History Questionnaires of the Diocese,[2] the Bureau of the Census publication, Religious Bodies,[3] the National Council of Churches' Yearbook of American Churches.[4]

All these data must be used critically of course.

Primary sources for the history of the Armenian Church in the United States include the records of the Annual Diocesan Conventions, Annual Reports of each Primate, Yearly

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[1] U. S., Department of Justice, Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1869-1944.

[2] Mimeographed copies of Parish History Questionnaires sent out by the Diocese of the Armenian Church, New York, 1972.

[3] U. S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1941.

[4] Benson Y. Landis (ed.), Yearbook of American Churches (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ, 1916-1971).

Reports of the Diocesan Council, and minutes of the meetings of the Church Trustees of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Worcester, Mass., and the Holy Translators Church in Providence, Rhode Island. The Annual Reports are housed at the Diocesan Center, 630 Second Avenue, New York, New York. The minutes of the Church Trustees meetings are housed at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, 87 Salisbury St., Worcester, Mass., and St. Mesrob Church, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, Rhode Island, respectively.

The back files of the Armenian language press, especially Tzain Haireniatz, Hairenik, The Gotchnag, Azk, Baikar, and Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy cover approximately seventy-five years and contain both articles and editorials pertinent to our topic. These publications are often highly flavored to satisfy the editorial preferences of the papers, but are useful if employed judiciously.

Background materials are also found in pamphlets, leaflets, and church directories, which contain valuable local information.

C. Limitations

This dissertation is limited to a study of the history of the Armenian Church in the United States. It is not intended to be a history of the Armenians in America. Thus, the descriptions of the political, cultural, economic, and social conditions of Armenian immigrants will be offered only as they provide a background to a fuller understanding of the Armenian Church in the United States.

The lack of systematized records and data concerning the beginnings and development of the Church and Diocese is a major hindrance to this task. Many experiences and reflections of Armenian clergymen and church officials which would have revealed the temper of the times, have remained unrecorded. These lacks have proved to be a serious detriment to the project. Fortunately, sufficient data does survive to make the study possible, though occasional lacunae must simply be noted as such as we proceed.

D. Previous Research in the Field

No scholarly study, either in Armenian or English, on the Armenian Church in the United States, has ever been written. That this is true is due largely to the language barrier faced by non-Armenian scholars, and to disinterest, unwillingness, or inability on the part of those with linguistic competence to undertake such a study.

Some partial efforts in this direction have been undertaken in Armenian. Among these is an article entitled, _Amerigahay Kaghoutĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ_, ("The Armenian-American Community and Its Origins"), by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian, the editor of _Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ_ ("The

Armenian-American Yearbook"),[1] in which he traces the history of the Armenian Church up to 1898. He proposed, by way of future articles, to present the history of particular Armenian churches and colonies in the United States, with the hope of thereby providing a complete picture of the Armenians and their faith in this land. Unfortunately, this study was left unfinished. (For transliteration refer to Appendix I.)

A second study, by Reverend Ardēn Ashjian, is entitled *Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn Arhachnortagan T'emin Hayots' Amerigayi* ("Statistics and History of the Armenian Diocese of America"). This book presents the history of the Armenian Diocese, and various churches from their beginnings through the year 1948.[2]

Both studies provide necessary data concerning Armenians and the Armenian Church, but tend to be narrative rather than critical.

E. Method of the Dissertation

The method of this dissertation will be historical, descriptive, and critical. The author shall prepare as concise and complete a chronological narrative of events as possible to describe the development of the Armenian Church in the United States. In addition the writer shall seek to interpret and understand those events related to church life. This will involve a genuine appreciation and understanding of the home area whence the immigrants came and the reciprocal effects wrought by American-Armenians on the home church and by the Holy See and its missions among the Armenians of the dispersion. In addition, the author shall seek to evaluate the effect of the American melting pot on Armenian Christianity and the contributions, past, present, and potential, of the Armenian Church to the American scene. The narrative is brought to a close in the year 1944. This denotes the end of an era and the start of a new with the transformation of an essentially "immigrant" church into a "native" church.

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[1] Moushegh Seropian, *Amerigahay Kaghoutĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ*, ("The Armenian-American Community and Its Origins"), *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ* (Boston: Cilicie Press, 1912), pp. 12-82; 1913, pp. 36-125.

[2] Ardēn Ashjian, *Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn Arhachnortagan T'emin Hayots' Amerigayi* ("Statistics and History of the Armenian Diocese of America") (New York: Lēylēgian Press, 1949).

CHAPTER II

FROM NOAH'S ARK TO AMERICA

A. The Armenians: History at a Glance

Historical Armenia, homeland of the Armenian immigrant, centered around Biblical Mount Ararat and occupied a territory between 37° latitude and 41° 15' north, and 37° longitude and 47° east, an area of approximately 100,000 square miles.[1] The Armenian uplands were situated between the Caucasus and the Black Sea in the north, Mesopotamia in the south, Cappadocia to the west, and the Caspian Sea to the east. The western portion of this territory was known as Armenia Minor while Armenia proper was often referred to as Armenia Major. Cilicia in Asia Minor, on the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, during the Middle Ages became the home of the Armenians and was known as Lesser Armenia. Armenia reached the height of territorial expansion during the reign of Armenian King Tigranes the Great (94-56 B.C.) when, in addition to the two Armenias, it embraced Cappadocia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and parts of Parthia and Palestine.

Today, only 11,175 square miles of this territory with a population of 2.5 million are included in the Armenian Soviet

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[1] Mount Ararat, highest point 17,000 feet, is the most famous feature of Armenia. It is the legendary resting place of Noah's Ark mentioned in the Bible. (Gen. 8:4; 2 Kg. 19:37; Is. 37:38; Jer. 51:27.) The Oxford Annotated Bible.

Socialist Republic. In the north and east it borders on the Union Republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan and in the west and southeast on Turkey and Iran.

Historically, Armenians are one of the oldest races--contemporaries of the ancient Egyptians, the Babylonians, Hittites, Assyrians, and a host of others which have become extinct.

Historians offer various hypotheses concerning the origins and development of the Armenian people. Some maintain that the Armenians of today are the descendants of the aborigines of Urartu who developed a civilization of their own as early as 3000 B.C. Others believe that they are descendants of the ancient Hittites who thrived about the same time. Still others maintain that Armenians originally came from the region in Eastern Europe known as Thrace between the seventh and eighth centuries.[1] The accepted view is that Armenians are a merger of the natives of the Ararat region and the newcomers from Europe. These newcomers called themselves Armen, while the natives referred to themselves as Hay and their country as Hayasdan.[2]

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[1] Herodotus History VII. 73. Strabo Geography XI. 8; Jacques DeMorgan, The History of the Armenian People (Boston: Hairenik Press, no date); Ts. B. Aghaian, et al. Hay Zhoghovrti Badmout'iwn("History of the Armenian People"), I (Erevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1971).

[2] Y. A. Manandian, A Brief Outline of Armenian History (New York: Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, 1964), p. 33-35.

Situated on the crossroads of the East and West, from the time it emerged as a well-defined state, for twenty-six centuries, Armenia was plagued by successive hordes of predatory empires such as the Medo-Persians, Seleucids, Sassanians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Byzantines, Seljuks, Mongols, and Ottoman Turks. To survive the political, economic, and social upheavals of centuries and to continue to exist as a people has been the saga of the Armenians. This amazing power of survival was ascribed to their grit toughness and endurance, according to H. F. B. Lynch, an English explorer who travelled through Armenia in 1893 and 1898.[1]

With each invasion Armenia was repeatedly devastated. Its cultural monuments were destroyed, its trade broken, its agriculture ruined, its economy paralyzed, itself bled white. In spite of these calamities and, miraculously enough, thanks to their creative energy and resilience, the Armenians were able to heal their wounds and to start the work of reconstruction all over again.[2] According to Professor Lang, the preservation of a national spirit and the resurrection of Armenians were made possible because:

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[1] David Marshall Lang, Armenia: Cradle of Civilization (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1970), p. 39.

[2] Because of these calamities, the majority of Armenians migrated from the fatherland and established colonies in Persia, India, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, the Transcaucasus, Crimea, Poland, Hungary, Holland, England, Russia, and the Balkans, thus creating the Armenian diaspora of the Modern Age. Terenig Poladian, The Role of Armenia in History (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1970), 3rd edition, p. 6.

> The Armenian is one of nature's individualists, a leaven for the conformist mass of the human race. Logically he should have given up the struggle and lain down to die long ago. But he refused and still refuses to surrender, and here lies the key to understanding the nature of this dogged, invincible, little people, whose contribution to human civilization is out of all proportion to its numerical strength.[1]

The "Armenian Question" arose in 1877-1878 during the Russian-Turkish War.[2] The reforms promised to Armenia by the San Stefano Treaty (Article 16) never materialized. The Ottoman Empire instead carried through its massacres of 1894-1896 in the Armenian provinces where some 300,000 Armenians fell victim to Ottoman atrocities. In 1908 Sultan Abdul Hamid II was overthrown by revolutionaries known as the Young Turks. One year later a massacre in Cilicia claimed the lives of more than 30,000 Armenians. At the outbreak of World War I the Young Turks ordered the massacre of more than one and one-half million Armenians to end the so-called "Armenian Question" once and for all. On May 28, 1918, Armenians won their freedom, defeating the Turkish Army at Sardarabad and declared Armenia an independent republic. In 1920 Armenia became Sovietized. Since then, substantial progress has been achieved in the arts, sciences, industry, and technology, despite the restraints of Soviet rule.

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[1] Lang, Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, p. 44.

[2] Shavarsh Toriguian, The Armenian Question and International Law (Beirut, Lebanon: Hamaskaine Press, 1973), pp. 17-28.

B. The Armenian Church: A Short Survey

The importance of the Armenian Church in Armenian history cannot be overemphasized. There can be no complete understanding of Armenian history without an adequate appreciation of the history of the Armenian Church, because the two histories are so intimately intertwined; indeed, especially after the loss of Armenian independence, the history of the Church and people became one, and so did the two histories until recent times.[1]

The Armenian Church considers herself to be of Apostolic origin because Christianity was first introduced into Armenia by the Apostles, Saint Thaddeus (35-43 A.D.) and Saint Bartholomew (44-60 A.D.), both of whom preached in Armenia and suffered martyrdom there. These two Apostles are referred to as the "First Illuminators of Armenia" because they were responsible for the establishment of the first Christian Church. After the martyrdom of these two Apostles their evangelical labors in Armenia were continued by bishops consecrated by them. The progress of Christianity in Armenia before the official conversion in 301 was carried on by these bishops and their subordinates despite religious persecutions by three kings during the years 110, 230, and 280.[1]

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[1] Mgrdich' Mouradian, Badmout'iwn Hayasdaneayts' Arhak'elagan Sourp Egeghets'woy ("History of the Holy Apostolic Church of Armenia") (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1972), pp. 23-24; Papkēn Giwlēsērian, Hay Egeghets'i ("The Armenian Church") (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1930), pp. 178-199.

Armenia adopted Christianity as its state religion in 301 A.D. during the reign of King Tiridates III of Armenia.[2] The proclamation of Christianity as the state religion of Armenia marked an important event, not only in the history of Armenia, but also in the annals of the Christian Church, because it preceded by some twelve years the Edict of Milan in 313 through which the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great decreed the Christian faith to enjoy equal privileges with paganism.

The conversion of Armenians to the new faith at the dawn of the fourth century was the handiwork mainly of Saint Gregory the Parthian, called the "Enlightener," or "Illuminator" of Armenia. Saint Gregory was a descendant of a noble Parthian family and was brought up in Hellenic culture. He received his ecclesiastical training at Caesarea, then a Christian center. After many years of persecution and suffering, Saint Gregory succeeded in converting King Tiridates who assisted Saint Gregory in converting the entire country and thereby proclaiming Christianity as the state religion in 301. With the adoption of Christianity Saint Gregory became Catholicos (i.e., all-embracing, supreme head) of the Armenian Church. His Catholicosal consecration was received at the hands of Leonitus, Bishop of Caesarea.

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[1] Mouradian, pp. 30-38.

[2] Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, Hay Egeghets'in ("The Armenian Church") (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicate of Cilicia Press, 1952), p. 5.

Saint Gregory built the first Christian Cathedral and the Monastery of Ēchmiadzin in the city of Vagarshapat (place where the only Begotten Son descended), then the capital of Armenia, in 303 as directed by Our Lord in a vision. This cathedral, now located in the Armenian SSR, is one of the oldest church edifices in continuous use in the world.

Saint Gregory immediately began the work of ecclesiastical organization. New bishoprics, monasteries and schools were established. Church rites and discipline were promulgated. The ministry and educational function of the Church, however, were not without their difficulties. Because there existed no Armenian alphabet, the Scriptures were read in Greek or Syriac which were not readily understood by the people.[1] The task of endowing the Armenian language with suitable letters fell to Saint Mesrob Masht'ots' (355-438), a learned Vartabed (archimandate, celibate priest) who had been strongly supported by Catholicos Sahag and King Vrhamshabouh of Armenia. His exhaustive experiments and toilsome search, travel and interviews with scholars of the time resulted in the composition of the Armenian alphabet in 406. It consisted of 36 characters.

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[1] During this period, in the Armenian Church there was an order of Verdzanogh (Readers), T'arkmanich' (Translators) who read and interpreted the Bible to the faithful.

Upon the completion of the alphabet, the translation of the Bible became imperative. Saint Mesrob and a host of church divines called *T'arkmanich'ner* labored under the wise guidance of Catholicos Sahag (348-435) to translate the Bible which took some thirty years to complete (406-436).[1] This was followed by the translation of the Liturgies of the Church Fathers, the Patristic literature, and the works of ancient philosophers, grammarians, and scientists.[2] This intensive literary activity in the field of translation was soon enriched by the original writings of the Armenian Church Divines and savants in the field of sacred poetry, liturgy, hagiography, exegesis, history, and theology. The names of

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[1] The translation of the Bible into Armenian was first made from a Syriac version. Later this translation underwent a thorough revision, being compared with a Greek Septuagint text brought from Constantinople by Armenian students who were sent there to further their education.

[2] Armenian Church Liturgy, in addition to prayers composed by Armenian Church Fathers, also contains parts of the Liturgies ascribed mainly to Saints Athanasius, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom. Among several translations of the Armenian Liturgy into English the most generally known is the one contained in F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern* and Western, (Oxford, 1896). An authoritative, historical study is the work of Hovsēp' Kat'rjian, *Sourp Badarkhamadoyts'k' Hayots'* ("The Sacred Missals of the Armenians"), (Vienna: Mkhitarist Press, 1897); A study with best English translation and commentary is provided by Tiran Nersoyan, *Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church*, (New York: Delphic Press, 1950). Some of the writings of the ancient authors have been lost and only a few Armenian versions are available; i.e., the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea. For a more detailed list of works largely preserved in the Armenian translations, see Karekin Sarkissian, *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Christian Literature* (London: Paster Press, 1960), pp. 21-24.

Eznig Goghpats'i, Eghdz Aghantots' ("Refutation of Heresies"); Hovhan Mantagouni, Jarher ("Homilies"); Goriwn Vartabed, Vark' Masht'ots'i ("Life of Masht'ots'"); and Ghazar P'arbets'i Badmout'iwn ("History"), in addition to Saints Sahag and Mesrob are mentioned. They were instrumental in ushering in that era in the fifth century known as the "Golden Age" of Armenian literature.[1]

The impact of Christian literature was soon put to a test when the Armenians resolved to bear arms against the Persians in defense of Christianity in the year 451. In that year the Armenians rose in open revolt against the Persians under the leadership of Vartan Mamigonian, General of the Army. Refusing to embrace Zoroastrianism as their religion. Vartan and his small army fought the vastly superior Persian Army. At Avarayr, Vartan and 1036 of his men were killed. An Armenian clergyman, Ghewont Erēts', became distinguished for his zeal and courage on the battlefield.

Concurrent with the Battle of Avarayr, the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon took place. In 451, with Armenia aflame and in revolt in the defense of Christianity, no church delegates were sent to attend the Council. The failure of the Armenians to attend the Council was due not only to travel inconveniences caused by the war between Armenians and

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[1] Apraham Zaminian, Badmout'iwn Hayots' Hin Kraganout'ean ("History of the Ancient Armenian Literature") (Beirut: Hoys Printing Press, 1941), 2nd edition. Norayr Bogharian, Hay Kroghner ("Armenian Writers") (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1971).

and Persians but also to a lack of interest in participating in the Councils for the simple reason that many times behind the theological problems, political and temporal pursuits were at work.

It was not until some forty years later that the Armenians were drawn into the controversy surrounding the Council of Chalcedon because of a dispute between the Syrian Church and the Nestorians.[1] The Armenian Church was strictly anti-Nestorian, and pro-Syrian; indeed, the Syrian Jacobite Church of the Antiochan Rite had asked the Armenian Church to support its position in the inter-church conflict. To settle the issue the Armenian Catholicos Papkēn called a Council of the Armenian Church in 506 at Touin. This Council rejected the acts of the Council of Chalcedon and officially proclaimed the adherence of the Armenian Church to the profession of faith which had been accepted by the first three Ecumenical Councils. The decision of the Armenian Church was followed by interminable controversies among the Armenian, Greek, and Russian Churches. These Churches charged the Armenian Church as a "monophysite," "schismatic" or Separated Church. The charge of monophysitism levelled against the Armenian Church was baseless because she not only repudiated monophysitism as a heresy, but also anathemized the real founder of the heresy along with Arius and Nestorius. In the Christological controversies, the Armenian Church reiterated her theology and position which was the unconfused unity of the Divine with the human in Christ, based upon the confession of Cyril of Alexandria at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The position of the Armenian Church is shared by that family of churches which are known as the Oriental Orthodox Churches, namely the Syrian Orthodox Church (Syrian Jacobite Church), the Syrian Orthodox Church in India (Malabar Jacobite Church), the Coptic Orthodox Church, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Although ethnically, culturally, and historically quite different, these have always maintained the unity of faith.[1]

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[1] A fuller treatment of the position of the Armenian Church concerning the Council of Chalcedon can be found in a book by Karekin Sarkissian, The Council of Chalcedon and The Armenian Church (London: S.P.C.K., 1965).

Between 640 and 650 Armenia was overrun by the Arab invasion. As a result of Arab domination, Greek-Armenian dispute diminished. In the political and religious spheres, Armenians held divided sympathies toward the Byzantine and Arab rulers. From the 9th to the 11th centuries, the Armenian Bagratids Dynasty held power in Armenia, while the Catholicate was removed from Ēchmiadzin to Ani, the Bagratid capital city in 992. After the fall of the Bagratids Dynasty in 1042-45, a large part of Armenia was occupied by the Byzantine Empire which intensified its policy of proselytism among Armenians with little success. In 1048 Seljuk Turks invaded Armenia, which prompted the Armenians to seek refuge in Cilicia in the

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[1] Karekin Sarkissian, The Witness of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Beirut: Mesrob Press, 1968).

Byzantine Empire. An Armenian nobleman, Ruben, established himself in Cilicia and became the founder of the Rubenids Dynasty in 1080. With this political change the Catholicate of Ēchmiadzin, which had already transferred to various places, was removed from Romkla (a castle on the river Euphrates) to Sis, new Capital of the Cilician Armenia Kingdom in 1293. Armenian Church headquarters remained in that city until 1441, when it was permanently transferred to its original site in Ēchmiadzin. During this period the Armenian Church was engaged in an ecumenical dialogue with the Greek and Latin Churches. St. Nersēs the Graceful (1102-1173) had distinguished himself as the initiator of attempts for union on the part of the Armenian Church.

The return of the Catholicate to Ēchmiadzin was vigorously advocated by the clergy of Armenian, properly known as the "Band of Eastern Divines" who opposed their Armenian Latinophile brethren in Cilicia. As a result of the Crusaders, who first arrived in Cilician Armenia in 1097, and the subsequent Latin Church propaganda and also pro-Latin policy of the Armenian Cilician kings, there appeared a Latino-Armenian brotherhood--Frateres Unitores--in 1333, whose sole aim was to make the Church of Armenia a satellite to the See of Rome. Therefore the Band of Eastern Divines invited the reigning Catholicos Krikor Mousapēgian to move to Ēchmiadzin. Upon his refusal, the Ecclesiastical Assembly which met at Ēchmiadzin in 1441 elected Giragos of Virab as the new

Catholicos. Thus, the See of Ēchmiadzin which was relocated in its original place once again came to be regarded as the Catholicate of All-Armenians, and the Catholicate at Cilicia as a special subordinate See. In addition, the Armenian Church has traditionally maintained two Patriarchates--in Jerusalem (seventh century) and Constantinople in 1461.

When Sultan Mehmet II the Conqueror (1451-1481) took the city of Constantinople in May, 1453, he was determined to make it the seat of the Ottoman Empire. Immediately the Sultan issued an edict by which he granted to all Cilician subjects of the Empire the right to organize their communities under their own ecclesiastical leaders, to whom were given absolute authority to deal in civil and religious matters as well as in criminal offenses that did not come under the Muslim religion or code of law. Thus in the Ottoman Empire the term millet (nation, religious community) came to be applied to the lawfully organized and legally recognized religious communities, those of the Greek Christians, the Armenian Christians, the Jews, and others. As such, the Christian Church, whether Greek or Armenian, became at once a civil and religious institution. The Sultan invested Bishop Hovagim of the Armenian Church of Bursa with honor and authority accorded to a Patriarch and raised his Diocese of Bursa to encompass a jurisdiction beyond the city of Constantinople into the farthest regions within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The Patriarch then was not only the ecclesiastical leader of a given community, but also the political head or millet bashi (the ethnarch).

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Armenian community in Turkey, especially in Constantinople, became the scene of bitter controversies waged between the Armenian Church communicants and their compatriots of Catholic and Protestant inclination. The separatist tendencies were both encouraged and supported by missionaries and European governments of Catholic and Protestant persuasion. On January 5, 1831 the Sublime Porte issued a berat (edict) granting the Armenian Catholics the right to form their own separate Catholic millet. In 1850 a similar edict was given to those Armenians who were separated from the Armenian Church to form the Protestant millet.

One significant characteristic feature of the Armenian Church in the nineteenth century in Turkey was the adoption of the National Constitution for the administration of the Church and the nation in 1863. It gave more power to the representatives of lay people and had a more communal and national character than its counterpart, the Polojenye (Supreme Regulation for Governing the Armenian Church in Russia), in Eastern Armenia. The supreme authority was placed in the national General Assembly in which the lay delegates outnumbered the clergy. It elected the Patriarch as well as the Religious and Civil Councils which formed the executive branch of the Constitution. Although the National Constitution marked improvement in education and social phases by the increase of schools, and in the Church by the adoption of a more systematic and active administration, however, it encouraged secularism to such an extent that the spiritual nature of the Church and her mission were overlooked and were exploited by Armenian political factions.

With the approach of the nineteenth century, the Armenian Church in Eastern Armenia came under the close supervision of the Tzarist Russian authorities. A rule for the Armenian Church called *Polojenye* was enacted by Emperor Nicholas in 1836. This regulation increased the power of the clergy in the government of the Church, but also reduced the participation of the laity in the administration of the Church. The Russification of the Armenian people and the absorption of the Armenian Church into Russian Orthodoxy was one policy which Armenians vehemently resisted. The nineteenth century in the Eastern Armenia was also marked by a surge of religious and cultural awakening. Many parish schools were opened in various parts of Armenia. A new Seminary, called Keōrkian *Jemaran*, was founded in Ēchmiadzin along with a new theological and Armenological review called *Ararat* in 1868. In the last decade of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth centuries the assimilation policy of the Russian Government increased and was climaxed by the confiscation of Armenian Church properties in 1903. The

Catholicos Mgrdich' Khrimian I (1892-1907), with the support of the clergy and the people, challenged the Russians who finally discontinued their adverse course of action.

It was Catholicos Khrimian who, in response to the request of the Armenian community in the United States, dispatched Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian as Primate of the Armenian Church in America in 1898. A decade earlier he had been the first Armenian priest to set foot in the United States in response to a petition from Armenian immigrants in Worcester, Massachusetts, who then numbered only three hundred.

C. The Pioneers (1618-1882)

Armenian settlers came to America as early as the seventeenth century. First among these courageous Armenians who crossed the uncharted ocean in 1618 to Jamestown Colony in Virginia was one known as "Martin the Armenian."[1] He was followed in 1653, by two Armenian silkworkers, who distinguished themselves as experienced and highly reputable masters of their skill and as promoters of the silk industry. With the scanty story of these two early Armenian settlers, the curtain falls on this stage of Armenian immigration in American history and remains closed until the year 1834, when an Armenian student, Khach'adour Osganian, made his way from Constantinople to New York. He journeyed under the sponsorship of the Protestant missionaries and is believed to have been the first Armenian to set foot on American shores in the early part of the nineteenth century.[1]

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[1] Peter Force, Historical Tracts, Vol. III: "A Declaration of the State of the Colonie and Affaires in Virginia" (Cambridge: Murray Printing Co., 1844), pp. 34-35; Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., The Records of the Virginia Company of London: The Court Book, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), pp. 13, 473, 477, 498; M. Vartan Malcom, The Armenians in America (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1919), pp. 5]-53; Louis Adamic, A Nation of Nations (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945), p. 287; Kingsbury, The Records of the Virginia Company, I., 633.

The individual immigrants who followed in the footsteps of Osganian up to 1882 came to America either as students, merchants, workers, or adventurers. These newcomers were all single males, ranging in ages from sixteen to thirty, of which only a few intended to make America their permanent home and the country of their adoption. The students, more so than the other groups, were inclined to remain here, while the merchants were primarily concerned with seeking new opportunities and avenues of free enterprise in the New World, thereby hoping to strengthen the foundations of their home-based firms. The workers, on the other hand, hoped to find their fair share of benefits and opportunities which had been denied them in the Old World. To this group the prospect of returning home one day as a wealthy man of great respectability was of prime importance.

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[1] Malcom, The Armenians in America, p. 57. Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1912, pp. 16-22.

In contrast to these were the adventurers whose concepts and motives for journeying to America were of an entirely different nature. Nothing appealed to these "soldiers of fortune" as much as the stories of the riches awaiting those who had the courage to seek them. The New Land was the "land of the goose that laid the golden egg" and the gorges and mountains were said to hide unknown and unseen treasures of unimaginable magnitude.

Despite the lack of concrete evidence, it can be hypothesized that the Armenians did make their way to the New World, emigrating individually or in small groups, with the native populations of countries such as Poland, Hungary, France, Holland, and England, where Armenian colonies were in existence. The Armenians from these countries were engaged in trade and commerce, an area in which they proved most adept. A certain writer, Franz Leoherri, presents the viewpoint that the pace of American business would not have appealed to these Armenian merchants, and thus they would have had no inclinations to remain in America.[1]

The Armenian immigration movement to the United States has not been treated in any depth by Armenian scholars, in the past or the present. However, individual writers have attempted to fill this gap by offering a variety of presentations. The following illustrate the diversity of their approach to this problem. In an unsigned article appearing in the Armenian newspaper, The Gotchnag, the writer divides Armenian immigration into three phases: the period of students, 1848-1875; the period of commerce, 1875-1896; and the period of workers, 1896-1904.[1] On the other hand, Archbishop Moushegh Seropian challenges this classification and expresses the sentiment that "these three periods equally have had within them the classes of students, merchants, and workers."[2] Still another source states that the phases of immigration "... may be distinctly divided into two periods: the period of commerce and education, and the period of immigration."[3]

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[1] Franz Leoherri, "Haik," ("Armenians") trans., Massis, (May 26, 1879).

In retracing the Armenian immigration movement, two major factors can be pointed out which gave impetus to the movement: (1) the coming of the Protestant missionaries and (2) the improvement of America-Ottoman relations.

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[1] "Miats'eal Nahankats' Hay Kaghout'ĕ," ("The Armenian Colony of the United States"), The Gotchnag, December 10, 1904, pp. 1669-1671.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ" Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 19.

[3] T. B. K. "Armenians as Citizens," Armenia, II (October, 1906), p. 14.

With the coming of the Protestant missionaries, more Armenians were exposed to American influence and thus were motivated to emigrate there. At first many of these were students and merchants. Later there was the great influx of workers.

The signing of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United States and the Sublime Porte on May 7, 1830, gave a new turn to Ottoman-American relations. This treaty granted American merchants and vessels favored treatment and granted American citizens immunity from arrest and imprisonment in the Empire and trial by Ottoman authorities.[1] American vessels called at the major Ottoman ports, such as Smyrna and Constantinople, bringing the American merchants into contact with those of the Ottoman Empire. David Offley, a merchant from Philadelphia, who had been training at Smyrna, married an Armenian woman.

At this point it is pertinent to discuss the first phases of Armenian immigration which stem from the activities of American missionaries sent to Turkey by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions who directly or indirectly encouraged Armenian youth to emigrate to the United States.

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[1] J. C. Hurewitz, Middle East Dilemmas (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 164.

1. Protestant Missionary Influence

The first contact between the Armenians and Protestant missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was made by Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk in 1821 in Jerusalem and then continued in the next decade in Constantinople through the efforts of William Goodell, Eli Smith, and Henry Dwight, graduates of Andover Theological Seminary. These relationships ushered in a new experience for the Armenians, enabling them to learn more about the land called "America." Although the Armenians viewed the America missionaries with wonder, the Turkish attitude was one of apprehension. They looked upon the missionaries, as well as all travelers and foreigners, with suspicion and misgiving. This was to be expected since the Turks were the ruling element in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover as Muslims, the Turks were to constitute the primary focus of Protestant proselytization. As the missionaries were soon to discover, the laws of the Empire expressly forbade any conversion from Islam to Christianity.

A wide variety of opinion exists among both Armenian and American writers concerning the role of the missionaries as catalysts in motivating the Armenians to emigrate to the United States. Those who are of Armenian Church persuasion

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[1] E. D. G. Prime, *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire* (New York, 1876), pp. 79, 106. William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book* (New York, 1859), I, 475. Quoted in David Finnie, *Pioneers East* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 120.

criticize the missionaries for their support of immigration. Aris Israēlian writes the following regarding the influence of the missionaries:

> And thus the missionaries began to educate in their schools a generation, according to their own plans. The focal point of the educational process thereafter was America. Around this nucleus revolved the entire body of 'scientific' knowledge that the student received. The subject matter of history and geography courses centralized on America. Science was already of American origin...[1]

A period of increased missionary activity was inaugurated when the American Board's Bebek Seminary was opened in Bebek on the Bosphorus in 1840. Cyrus Hamlin, a charismatic and energetic leader, was in charge of the school. These missionary institutions, both in Turkey and later in America, afforded the Armenians the opportunity to pursue higher education of both a religious and secular nature.

The American Missionary enterprise in Turkey sponsored theological schools and colleges in Constantinople, Bebek, Brusa, Smyrna, Trebizond (Trabzon), Erzerum, Aintab, and Harput. Missionaries as religious leaders and educators provided the natives with Christian education and opportunities for higher learning. A handful of missionaries favored the idea of educating the youth in their own native land, thereby enabling them to become workers in their own surroundings. However, the majority of American missionaries, either directly or indirectly, encouraged the young people to go to America in order to receive their higher education and to remain there if possible. Carl Wittke writes that "...by 1894, there were perhaps three thousand Armenians in the United States, largely as a result of the efforts of American missionaries."[1]

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[1] Aris Israēlian, "Amerigahay Kaght'aganout'iwnë" ("Armenian Emigration to America"), Vosdan, April 1, 1911, p. 399.

The effect of the American missionary work in Turkey was not confined only to religious life and activities. The missionaries, either consciously or unconsciously, stimulated a desire among the Armenians for the American way of life and her customs. They instilled a feeling of respect and admiration for the American ideals, the American pursuit of free enterprise, and for American practicality. Even more important, they inculcated a deep seated confidence in the integrity of America.

The prestige enjoyed by the United States among the Armenians in Turkey was mainly the by-product of the peaceful influence of American educational institutions and the missionaries themselves. Spiritually, every mission was an open window through which the natives could view with wonder the World of America. The Armenians are said to be the first among the other minorities in Turkey to experience the "American Dream."

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[1] Carl Wittke, We Who Built America (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), p. 460.

2. The Students

Missionary activities influenced many Armenian young people to flock to the educational centers of the United States in order to pursue studies in theology, medicine, engineering, and science. These students in America won the admiration and respect of many educators because of their high aptitude and excellence of scholarship.

It is possible to divide the student movement to the United States into three distinct groups. The first group consists of students sent to America under the auspices of the Protestant missionaries in order to further their ministerial education. Upon completing their religious training, they were expected to return to the homeland as preachers to administer to the needs of the Armenian Protestant communities.

The second group included students who emigrated to the United States to train in theological studies. Although some of these too returned to their homeland to labor for a few years, their intention was to bring their families to America and to make this their permanent home.

The third group of students shifted the focus of their studies from theology to the other professions. Many began in theology, but soon transferred into medicine. For this last group America was necessarily their permanent home.

The first student to come to the United States under missionary sponsorship was Khach'adour Osganian in 1834. He remained here for six years and then returned to Constantinople. In 1854 he returned to the United States where he established residence in Newark, New Jersey. He penned articles for the New York Herald, often attacking his own missionary sponsors for their proselytizing activities.[1]

Armenian students were enrolled in colleges and universities throughout America, majoring in philosophy, theology, pedagogy, economics, medicine, and commerce. During the course of their studies, many were involved not only in Armenian affairs, but also in the socio-political life of America. Among the names recorded during the Civil War, one finds numerous Armenians who fought in the Army. There were numerous physicians also, among them Garabed Kaloustian, Baronig Madt'ēosian, and the chief surgeon of the Philadelphia Hospital Simon Minasian. Armenian officers included Armenag of Khas, Narinian of Smyrna, and Zora T'atēosian.[2]

Upon the completion of their studies, a few of the students returned to their homeland. Of those who remained in America, some remained aloof from all things Armenian, while others participated actively in Armenian life, especially after the massacres of 1894-1896. Many of these former students were now self-supporting businessmen or professionals and thus were in a position to assist other needy Armenian students and to aid Armenian charitable organizations. They were instrumental in laying the foundations for the organization of Armenian communities in the United States.

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1912, pp. 16-17; Khach'adour Osganian, "Amerik'agan Bord Ēngerout'iwn ew Haik'," ("The American Board and the Armenians,") Masis, May 17, 1880.

[2] M. B. Ananigian, "Amerigahay Ousanoghout'iwně 1837-1895" ("Armenian Students of America"), Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1912, pp. 83-93.

3. The Merchants

Armenians have always been distinguished in commerce, much as the Phoenicians and Greeks were in ancient times. The goddess Anahid of the pre-Christian religion, patroness of Armenia, was called the Golden Mother, the Dispenser of Wealth, and above all, the Protectoress of Commerce, Agriculture, and Labor. Armenia was geographically situated upon the great trade route from Judea to Europe and had access by the four rivers Euphrates, Tigris, Araxes, and Chorokh, to Chaldea, Syria, Persia, and Constantinople. The ingenious Armenians from the very beginning transported the products of their country and the Orient to distant foreign lands.

When the gates of Turkey were opened to the American merchants in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Armenian merchants of Smyrna and Constantinople also opened their branch offices in New York, Boston, Chicago, and other American cities. It was the opening of the East to the West and thus Oriental commerce found a healthy market throughout the United States.[1] The Oriental rug business was introduced into this country by the Armenians, and even to this day, they are regarded as authorities and experts of this trade. The fruit growers, especially the grape growers of California, owe much to the Armenians who settled there.

An important segment of the Turkish-American commerce, especially that of the chief imports from Turkey, such as fruits, nuts, silver, manufactured wool, hides, and skins, and the roots of the licorice, was handled by Armenian merchants who had commercial offices both in Turkey and in major cities of America.

4. The Workers

Until the year 1880 Armenian workers were scarce in number in the United States. They were located mainly in New York, Boston, and Worcester, where they worked in various factories. Their economic and social conditions were very poor. These workers had been prompted and encouraged to emigrate by the missionaries who helped provide their steerage and jobs in the manufacturing firms of their acquaintances.

The workers were the first group to be caught by the "America fever" and to be filled with a spirit of adventure to explore the opportunities offered by the New World. Along with the workers there also came real adventurers in the true sense of the word. To these, family ties, memories of the fatherland, and religious affiliations were of secondary importance. It was difficult for them to be assimilated into American life or to become part of their own Armenian community life.[1]

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[1] T. B. K., "Armenians as Citizens," Armenia, II (October, 1906), 15.

In the 1870s a growing number of workers contemplated the establishment of Armenian colonies in America. The more business-minded among these men provided first-hand information concerning the prospects of America and for a while the Armenian papers printed articles inviting Armenians to depart for the United States. James Gordon Bennett, with whom Mr. Osganian journeyed to America in 1854, proposed to him that he go West, to the state of Ohio where he, Mr. Bennett, owned much land and to establish an Armenian colony there.[2]

Another individual, Michaēl Tophanēlian, emigrated to America in 1864, prompted by a similar hope. However, his dreams could not find realization. Several others also toyed with these ideas but their efforts too ended in failure. However, their inspiration was great despite the fact that their Utopian visions gained but small notice, a mere dot on the map of the history of immigration.

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[1] Sourēn, "Amerigahay Kaght'aganout'iwně," ("Armenian Immigration to America"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, December 9, 1899.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, pp. 18-19.

These first workers underwent the same hardships as did other immigrant workers in America, conditions necessarily imposed upon them by rural life. Rising prices, ruthless factory exploitation, ethnic prejudice, lack of skills, unfamiliarity with the English language, and the strange norms of American society contributed to the plight of the great mass of workers.

Most immigrant workers were young males who had ventured to America in hopes of providing monetary assistance to relatives left behind. One segment of them expected to return home as soon as they had saved enough money to realize their goals. These immigrants were called bantoukhdner in Armenian and were the pioneers of Armenian immigration. Another portion was undecided as to whether or not to remain in the United States or to return to the homeland. Many of the attempts at immigrant organization reflect this temporary quality. However, the tragic state of affairs after the massacre of 1894-1896 convinced the immigrants that they should remain here. What was but a temporary port now became a permanent home!

5. Extent of Armenian Immigration Prior to 1882

The early records of the Commissioner General of Immigration beginning with the year 1820, make no reference to the Armenians. In immigration statistics the Armenians were counted as nationals of the various countries from which they emigrated--i.e., largely from Turkey and Russia. The Turkish and Russian governments themselves failed to keep accurate records of the departures. Thus the exact number of Armenian immigrants cannot be discovered.

Although Armenian estimates and immigration sources differ, it is generally agreed that the majority of immigrants from Turkey were Armenians rather than Turks.[1] This assumption is based on the fact that the Armenians had good reason to leave Turkey and to a lesser extent Russia because of widespread persecutions. The records of the United States Commissioner General of Immigration show the information as listed below.[2]

YEAR	IMMIGRANTS FROM TURKEY
1820-1830	21
1831-1840	7
1841-1850	44
1851-1860	83
1861-1870	129
1871-1882	478
	762

The above table reveals certain data which deserve analysis. First, it appears that the Turkish government did not encourage Armenians to emigrate to other lands, probably due to the fact that the Armenians were the skilled element of the country. After 1869 the Ottoman Government had pursued a policy of not permitting expatriation of Ottoman subjects without first obtaining Imperial consent. This policy was firmly adhered to, especially with the outflow of subjects in 1907. An Imperial decree reiterated its position positively, prohibiting the departure of subjects except on the deposit of a satisfactory guarantee to return.[1] The figures indicate a gradual growth of immigration partly due to the factors discussed previously, such as the Protestant missionary influence and improvement of American-Ottoman relations. Finally, the records of the U. S. Commissioner General of Immigration reveal that the first immigrants came from the European part of the Ottoman Empire. It so happened that those in European Turkey had more contact with the missionaries and with European merchants and therefore displayed a desire to emigrate earlier.

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[1] Leland James Gordon, American Relations with Turkey (Philadephia: University of Penn. Press, 1932), p. 311.

[2] Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Dept. of Commerce, 1958), pp. 56-66.

In conclusion, the Armenian colony in America, in 1880, had been in existence some sixty years. It was established by young Armenians who were caught by "America fever" and came to study in America through the sponsorship of missionaries. The example set by these pioneers became a source of encouragement for other young persons to migrate to the land of abundance and opportunity. In this manner during the following decades a growing stream of Armenian bantoukhdner (immigrants) came to American shores. The first among these were determined to return to their homeland upon completion of their studies and accumulation of savings, to enable them to enjoy relative economic stability in their native villages. This was the major reason for the lack of development of group consciousness within the early Armenian colony in America, a factor necessary for the establishment of sound and strong colonies.

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[1] Gordon, American Relations with Turkey, p. 317.

D. Armenian Immigration to the United States: Causes and Effects (1882-1944)

Aside from the universal desire for adventure and greater opportunity, a chief cause of Armenian emigration to America was the political and religious persecutions they underwent at the hands of the Turks. From 1894 to 1896, and then again in 1909 and 1915, the Turks perpetrated horrendous massacres upon the Armenian people which claimed the lives of more than two and one-half million men, women, and children. Thus caravan after caravan of Armenian immigrants fled from Turkish tyranny and poverty to a haven called America.

It would be incorrect to attribute Armenian immigration to the United States to only the reasons cited hereto. The Armenians, like the Jews, have been a nation in dispersion. Their love of adventure, and "America fever," like a highly communicable disease, spread among the people by means of the thousands of "America letters" written by friends and relatives already in the United States. These letters reached the humble cottages of the peasants as well as the mansions of the well-to-do in every village and town of Armenian population.

Thousands of Armenians who came to these American shores felt that in Turkey they were doomed to remain in the class rayah into which they had been born. America, so they had heard, was a country where a man was judged on his own merits and achievements rather than by his ancestry or parentage. Armenians flocked to the United States because they desired to live as free men with equal rights. Were they worthy of it? The following testimony was presented by one of the former presidents of Cornell University and a noted statesman and scholar, Dr. Andrew D. White.

> The Armenian is one of the finest races in the world physically, morally, and intelligently. As I have said on another occasion if I were asked to name the most desirable races to be added by immigration to the American population I would name among the very first the Armenian.[1]

There were three major causes for the movement of Armenian immigration from Turkey to the United States. First was the wish to escape from political oppression by the Ottoman government; a second cause was the desire to escape religious persecution; and the third factor was the need of the immigrants to improve their economic conditions.[1] Another important reason was the quest for higher education on the part of Armenian youth who proved to be of high intellectual acumen.

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[1] Andrew D. White, "The Future of Turkey," Armenia, IV (September, 1910), 2.

1. The Political Oppression

The year 1878 is important in the annals of Armenian history for the fact that Turkey, as one of the signatory nations of the Treaty of Berlin, solemnly promised to undertake political reforms in six Armenian-populated vilayets or provinces of the Empire, and instead the Sultan armed and licensed the belligerent elements of the Muslim population to war against the Christians, a measure resulting in the Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896.

The figures of the Commissioner General of Immigration indicate that in the years preceding the great massacres Armenian emigration to America did not exceed three thousand. However, a sudden upward surge can be noticed in the years following the massacres. In 1894, only 298 people had come to America from the Ottoman Empire; in 1895, this number swelled to 2,767; in 1896 to 4,139; in 1897 to 4,732; and in 1898 to 4,275, totalling 16,211 immigrants in a five-year period.[1] Although these figures do not indicate the nationalities of these 16,211 Ottoman subjects, there can be no doubt that they were mostly of Armenian extraction. These people were forced to leave their homes because of the massacres, lest they suffer further reprisals at the hands of their perpetual oppressors. The Massacre of 1894-1896 did claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of Armenians.[2] International outrage, strong at first, subsided in time, leaving a martyred nation alone to mourn her dead and to lament for her youth who were leaving home to come to America where only the unknown awaited them. "The word 'Armenian' has a connotation of horror; we are accustomed to see it followed by 'atrocities', 'Massacre', 'outrage'; it has become an adjective of uncredible suffering," observes Charlotte Perkins Gilman, writing in the periodical Armenia, expressing her indignation at these national crimes.[3]

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[1] See also the following for further readings on the topic: Gordon, *American Relations with Turkey*, pp. 295-312; "Haye Inchou Gě Kaght'ē," ("Why the Armenian Emigrates"), *The Gotchnag*, January 31, 1914, pp. 105-108; "Turkyo Vijagě," ("The Situation of Turkey"), *The Gotchnag*, July 24, 1909, pp. 689-691; Malcom, *The Armenians in America*, pp. 74-79.

The Young Turk Revolution (Committee of Union and Progress) in 1908 brought about new hopes of reform and was hailed throughout the world as the dawn of a new era for Turkey. Armenians took part in the universal rejoicing. However, the Young Turks soon dispelled all illusions and staged the massacres in Adana in 1909. "Turkification" was the core of their platform. The eminent English historian, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, makes the following acute observation that "from the beginning of their regime the Young Turks have pursued their nationalistic programme of butchery."[1]

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[1] Historical Statistics of the United States, pp. 56-59, 66.

[2] Edward M. Bliss, Turkey and the Armenian Atrocities (Philadelphia: J. H. Moore and Co., 1896), p. 553; James Bryce, The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916 (London: Sir Joseph Causton and Son, Ltd., 1916), pp. 478-481.

[3] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "International Duties," Armenia, I (October, 1904), 10.

Six years later in the spring of 1915 the Turks unveiled their plan to destroy the Armenian people. The tyrannous crimes were followed by wholesale deportation of young and old alike into the wilderness of the Arabian deserts. The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, former United States Ambassador to Turkey, summarizes the Turkish criminal activities. "The facts contained in the reports received at the Embassy from absolutely trustworthy eyewitnesses surpass the most beastly and diabolical cruelties ever before perpetrated or imagined in the history of the world."[2]

From 1907 through 1914 the exodus of immigrants from Turkey reached its height. The figures recorded in the Annual

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[1] Toynbee, "The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks," The New Armenia, September 15, 1917, p. 278.

[2] Henry Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau's Story (Garden City, New York; 1919), pp. 337-338; Henry Morgenthau "The Greatest Horror in History," The New Armenia, X (May, 1918), 72.

Reports of the Commissioner of Immigration for this period list 219,885 immigrants entering the United States.[1] This comparatively large growth can be attributed to the deteriorating political, religious, and economic conditions of the Armenian minority in the Ottoman Empire.

2. Religious Persecution

The millet system that the Ottomans created, by which Christian and Jewish minorities became autonomous groups, rendered an invaluable service to the survival of the Armenian Church and nation. On the other hand, it caused the church to suffer a setback by involving it in matters other than those of an ecclesiastical nature.[2] As a result, the Patriarchal elections were tempered to satisfy the whims of the Palace. Meanwhile, being a millet member meant second class citizenship, higher taxes and unchecked persecution by Muslim governmental officials whenever they felt inclined to do so. Thus, implicit in Sultan Abdul Hamid's anti-Armenian policy was his leadership of the Pan-Islamic movement. As to the Young Turks, Pan-Islamism was also alleged in justifying the Armenian Massacres of 1915. In fact, the Young Turks critized their ancestors for neglecting to convert people to Islam during earlier centuries.[3] The Young Turks did not stop at the persecution of life and property, but also directed their activities against the faith and church of the people by way of government sanctions against the Church. These measures culminated in the deportation of the Armenian Patriarch and in the transferral of the Catholicate of Cilicia from Sis to Jerusalem, where a new administrative system for the Church was adopted under the name of the Catholicate and Patriarch of Turkey. Thus the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was reduced to a mere Vicarage and to the Catholicos-Patriarch of Jerusalem was given a Synod by which to govern the church. The aim of the Turkish government was twofold: (1) to minimize the jurisdiction and rights of the Catholicos of All-Armenians over the Armenians of Turkey and (2) to sever the ties of the Armenians of Turkey with the Armenians in Caucasia. In 1918, after the defeat of Turkey and the presence of the Allied fleet in the harbor of Constantinople, the Turks were forced to reestablish the Armenian Patriarchate.[1]

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[1] Gordon, American Relations with Turkey, p. 305.

[2] Joseph L. Grabill, Protestant Diplomacy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), pp. 50-52.

[3] Morgenthau, "The Greatest Horror in History," The New Armenia, X (May, 1918), 72.

Most of the uprooted Armenians relocated themselves in the Middle Eastern countries. Among these were anumber who wanted to depart for America but their wish remained unfulfilled because the United States was on the verge of adopting new policies for immigrants. In retrospect, it is significant to note how few Armenians chose to convert to Islam in the perilous days of 1915. Most had been given a choice to convert or to be deported and/or massacred. They chose the latter.

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[1] "Bolsoy Azkayin Badriark'out'ean Verahasdadout'iwně," ("The Reestablishment of the National Patriarchate of Constantinople"), The Taurus, December 12, 1918, pp. 794-796. Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, Khohk'ew Khosk' ("Thoughts and Reflections") (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1929), pp. 339-344.

3. The Economic Motivation

While Armenian immigration is attributed primarily to political and religious causes, it cannot be wholly explained on these grounds. The movement was motivated by economic causes as well. The Armenian populace of Turkey had grown weary of the economic "straight jackets" placed upon it by the Turkish authorities. Poverty hung its dark spectre over every Armenian home in villages and towns.

More than many of the other subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians distinguished themselves in matters of money and finance. As bankers, financiers, and merchants, as well as money changers and hucksters, they performed useful services in the Empire. Many of them amassed large fortunes and won respectability in society. James Bryce, the English traveler, statesman, and intellect, makes the following comments concerning Armenian vitues:

> Among all those who dwell in Western Asia they stand first, with a capacity for intellectual and moral progress, as well as with a natural tenacity of will and purpose, beyond that all of their neighbors--not merely of Turks, Tartars, Kurds, and Persians, but also of Russians. They are a strong race, not only with vigorous nerves and sinews, physically active and energetic, but also of conspicuous brain power.[1]

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[1] James Bryce, "Armenian Virtues," Armenia, IV (August, 1910), 9.

The economic talents the Armenians had enjoyed had always generated a considerable amount of odium among those who did not share them. They felt that the economic progress made by the Armenians must be checked at any cost, even by the use of state power. Thus the protection offered to Armenian merchants, artisans, and farmers was reduced to nil and taxes were increased to the point where they were unremitting, unlimited, and merciless.

Consequently when the United States began to work her way out of the financial panic in the mid-nineties it eased the restrictions on immigration and many a young Armenian came to America to escape economic deprivation at home. Poverty and hunger drove thousands of people from their native land to seek a better life in America.

4. "America Fever"

By 1890 every village and parish in the homeland was gripped by "America fever," much like a contagious disease.

Three major factors contributed to the influence of "America fever." First, "America letters" from recent immigrants supplied excellent publicity. A vast volume of "America letters" exists in American literature written by various immigrant nationalities. These letters vividly portrayed the wonders of the new country and inspired friends and relatives to emigrate. However, not all of them were laudatory, as some expressed stories of hardship, illness, and even regret for having yielded to the lure of the New World.

A second factor in the spread of "America fever" was the artificial advertisements and efforts of the steamship companies, railway companies, money lenders, and labor agents who flocked to both European and Middle Eastern lands promoting travel to the United States. Thirdly, the people who had been to America and then had returned to their native homeland told their friends of their prosperity and progress and of the wonders they had seen.

5. The Arrival in America

In order to alleviate some of the difficulties and hardships encountered by the Armenian immigrants the Armenian Colonial Association of New York was formed in 1909 with a branch in Chicago. The Association was financially supported by wealthy Armenians, among them such names as Mihran Karagēōzian and Garabed T. P'oushmáhian. The main objectives of the Association were outlined as follows: (1) To extend aid in a brotherly spirit and by practical means to all those Armenian immigrants who find themselves in destitute circumstances and in need of assistance. (2) To try to uplift the intellectual and moral life of the Armenian immigrant in America.[1] The Association was very effective in rendering services to the incoming immigrants at Ellis Island. First, it served as a labor bureau in trying to locate jobs for the new arrivals. Secondly, the immigrant bureau assisted those immigrants who met with difficulties at Ellis Island. Thirdly, it rendered financial assistance to those Armenians who gave evidence of dire circumstances. Finally, the Association conducted free public education courses which offered instruction on American society and structure.

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[1] "Hay Kaght'ayin Ĕngeragts'out'ean Kordzounēōut'iwnnerĕ," ("The Activities of the Armenian Colonial Association"), The Gotchnag, July 5, 1911, p. 686.

Often home was nothing more than a single room in a tenement house in one of the slum areas. The immigrant's first reaction may have been one of disappointment. What a startling contrast between the peaceful village he left behind and the noise and confusion of the crowded streets of this industrial city. Back home everyone spoke Armenian and/or Turkish. Here many strange tongues were heard which turned one's head and made one feel as though he were lost in a modern Babel. The one consolation he had was his own friends and relatives who after working hours might take him to an Armenian restaurant or club to be introduced to other Armenian immigrants like himself. Here he felt at home once again, exchanging news from home and discussing the latest trend in employment in America. A new immigrant, for obvious reasons, was the main attraction.

6. The End of the Open Door

By 1924 the Quota system caused a curtailment of immigration from abroad. As a result of isolation nativistic ideologies and later protests, restrictions were imposed under the Quota Law of 1924.[1] Grabill writes that "mission executives in the United States sought vainly to increase immigration quota for the Armenians."[2] The Quota Law caused more hardship and suffering for the Armenians. Ships arriving in New York brought many Armenians who were refused admission into the country. The following quotation from a minority report signed by Representatives Isaac Siegel of New York and Adolph J. Sabath of Illinois depicts the plight of the Armenian immigrant:

> Credible evidence was presented to the committee showing that a large number of unfortunate Armenians had their passports vised many months before the quota law was enacted. Notwithstanding the fact that they suffered most during the war, on arrival here they found themselves barred by the present quota law which this resolution seeks to extend for another year.[3]

The Calvary of the Armenian seemed to have no end. After grim days at home under Turkish tyranny and then the storm-tossed journey to America, they arrived here only to find the doors of New Canaan closed before them. The following excerpt from a poem by Isabel Fiske Conant,

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[1] Grabill, Protestant Diplomacy, p. 63.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Edith Abbott, Immigration Select Documents and Case Records (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 243.

"Armenians at Ellis Island," is quite suggestive of the mood of the times.

> It's since the war that man has done its worst
> And stricken is the sentry at our gates;
> Torch-bearing liberty... And now again
> Another group is here. This time we know
> What waits for them, deported...with what pain
> Must Christ's old wounds reopen, if they go!
> Spare His torn feet and hands...[1]

E. Causes for Domestic Problems

In the course of their stay in America, the Armenians congregated in industrial centers and lived in neighborhoods almost exclusively composed of Armenians. If America was confusing to the Armenian immigrant, he, in his turn, with his different appearance and mannerisms, was bewildering to the American. Too often the old-stock American failed to appreciate the qualities of the newcomers and resented their presence. Some of the prejudice was brought on by the immigrants themselves who were hesitant to compromise with America.

Once the immigrant decided to make America his permanent home and to establish himself economically, it was not too difficult to witness the erosion of the Armenian spirit. For the children of the uprooted immigrant parents, it is safe to say there was no other language but English and no other country but America. To them, loyalty was a one-way street. Their parents shared a loyalty both to America and to Armenia. An immigrant, in whose heart the ethos of his fatherland remained a burning nostalgia, could never overcome the shock of the apathy of his offspring toward his ethnic traditions. The Armenian immigrant brought with him memories and experiences from the Old World, determined to carry on his heritage as much as possible in the new environment. This heritage included the Armenian Church and language, love of fatherland, customs and traditions. The American-born Armenian essentially valued but one of these--the Church. And the survival of that Church was contingent upon the understanding that in the course of time it was to be "Americanized" if its continued existence in this society were to be justified.

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[1] Isabel Fiske Conant, "Armenians at Ellis Island," The New Armenia, XIV (January-February, 1922), 11.

1. Armenian Colonies and Settlements

During the 1880s and onward, the Armenian immigrant appears to have followed a pattern in reaching America. Upon arrival in this country, he most often went to the home of a relative or village acquaintance. Here he would get help in securing quarters and information concerning employment, as well as much-needed advice about various customs of the new land. He might also deliver a message or souvenir from a close relative or friend in Turkey. Most often these contacts were previously arranged so that the new immigrant would be met upon his arrival.

Thus, the geographic and occupational distribution of the immigrants depended to some degree upon the location of earlier immigrants. The newcomers, in their choice of work and residence, were in a great measure influenced by the circumstances of the immigrants who preceded them. Consequently, New York and Worcester in the early 1880's were the two cities where a relatively large number of Armenians settled.

Thus, despite their provincial background, the Armenians preferred to stay in the urban areas of New York, Boston, Worcester, Providence, and Fresno, where they often lived in sections called "Little Armenias." The majority settled as follows:

State	Number of Armenians
New York State	17,391
Massachusetts	14,192
Rhode Island	4,923
Illinois	3,313
California	2,564
New Jersey	2,115
Pennsylvania	2,002
	46,500[1]

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[1] Annual Reports of the Commission of Immigration, 1899-1917, quoted in Malcom, The Armenians in America, pp. 71-72.

2. Language Barriers

Most of the Armenian immigrants were handicapped by their lack of fluency in the English language. This posed a serious problem at first since it was a barrier to adjusting to life in America. There were few similarities between the English and Armenian languages. Even if they learned the language, they still retained an accent. Some however resorted completely to the usage of Armenian and depended upon fellow-Armenians to act as interpreters.

The working class suffered the most. When work was slow, they were the first to be dismissed from their jobs. These workers were often assigned menial jobs. This fact helped to explain why so many Americans in the beginning assumed that that segment of Armenian immigrants who could not speak English correctly were uneducated. Often American employees did not realize that many Armenians were well-educated in their native tongue. The truth of the matter was that there were fewer illiterates among the Armenians than any other group in the "new" immigration. Of all the Armenian men, women, and children admitted into the United States between 1899 and 1917, only 23.9 percent could not read or write in Armenian. A simple comparison with other nationalities reveals the following picture.[1]

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[1] Malcom, The Armenians in America, p. 104.

Nationality	Percent Illiterate in Their Native Language
Bulgarian	41.7
Greek	26.4
Hebrew	26.0
Roumanian	35.0
Southern Italian	53.9
Polish	35.4
Portuguese	68.2
Russian	38.47
Syrian	53.3
Armenian	23.9

It was some consolation to the Armenian immigrants that there were also a great number of Americans who were sympathetic to their plight, understood their problems and treated them with a humane attitude. These people offered extensive help in overcoming the language barrier rather than viewing the problem with a prejudicial mentality.

3. The Economic Factor

The Armenians, as other minority groups, were resented for providing cheap labor. Organized labor championed the cause of American workers and supported strong legislation restricting immigration. As long as there was an urgent need for more workers, immigration was not considered a serious threat to American labor. When business prospects were less than promising and jobs less available, labor leaders became uncompromisingly opposed to immigration, fighting it with every weapon at their disposal. The rank-and-file worker also expressed anti-"foreign" sentiments which often resulted in violent outbursts.

A further charge against the immigrants was that they accepted jobs at certain factories, mines, and other companies where workers were on strike. The unwitting immigrants were regarded as "scabs" and quite often were subjected to humiliating experiences and violent assaults.[1] Unfamiliarity with the English language, the nature of trade union procedures and activities, and the urgent need for immediate cash for themselves, their parents, and families, compounded the immigrants' labor problem.

4. Living Environment

The vast majority of Armenians, having settled in the tenements of large cities, wanted to be with their *ergrats'i* (countrymen) who spoke the same language, observed the same customs and traditions, and celebrated the same religious holidays. Armenians naturally desired the company of their fellow countrymen as they extended aid and sympathy to each other whenever illness or misfortune visited them.

Forced to live in the decaying areas of the city and faced with discrimination, the Armenians were admonished for congregating in ghettos. Thus many cities and towns came to have "Little Armenias" almost entirely inhabited by Armenians.[2]

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[1] Sograd Khan K'elofiants', "Hay Kordzavorě Amerigayi Mēch," ("The Armenian Worker in America"), *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, p. 195.

[2] "Mer Hamakhmpoumnerou Masin," ("About our Congregations"), *The Gotchnag*, December 12, 1914, pp. 1177-1180.

The crowding, noise, and unsanitary conditions of these sections of the large cities were repugnant to the old-stock Americans and to the immigrants themselves.

In the beginning, nearly all the Armenian immigrants were single males who had come to America with the idea of rapidly attaining a few riches and hurrying home. They usually lived in non-family groups. Usually three or four persons, and sometimes as many as eight or ten, shared an apartment and divided the rent, which was generally between $1.50 and $2.50 per month for each tenant. One of the men usually assumed precedence and managed the apartment for the others, as well as serving as cook and housekeeper. The system was known as *khoumana*, the Turkish expression for this type of a living arrangement. There were instances where the lodging was provided by a married compatriot. Occasionally, the men took turns buying and cooking the food while there were others who ate at Armenian restaurants and coffeehouses. Sleeping quarters in these houses were far from adequate and often the immigrants fell victim to a variety of diseases.

Many Armenian immigrants became disillusioned and chose to return to the homeland and the villages of their birth. Others persisted in their struggle to adapt to America. In his attempts to create a more meaningful and tolerable way of life, he took pains to improve his environment, and just as often strived to divest himself of ghetto life.

5. Religious Differences

Another factor contributing to anti-immigrant sentiment stemmed from religious peculiarities. Until the outbreak of the American Revolution, the colonists were mainly of English and Scotch stock, supplemented by northern Europeans and Irish. These immigrants were predominantly of Protestant persuasion and gave a fundamentalist coloring to American religious life from the beginning.

The Armenian orthodox immigrant not only fell into the East European category of non-Protestants, but himself was equally bewildered by the diversity of religious background in America. His initial religious encounter was by way of being solicited by local Protestant churches, and indeed by Protestant indoctrinated Armenian ministers. The absence of Armenian Churches in America disarmed the Armenian orthodox immigrant of any denominational preference. However, militant Armenian Protestant ministers launched a deliberate campaign of solicitation and proselytization among the unsuspecting orthodox Armenians.

In 1888, the vast body of Armenian orthodox disgusted by the policy of proselytization especially carried on by the American Board, petitioned to the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople for a priest. This marked the beginning of the establishment of the Armenian Church in America.

F. Patterns of Adjustment

Nearly all the Armenian immigrants in their adjustment to the new surroundings appear to have grouped themselves into one of two categories. The first quickly integrated itself with the interests and activities of American society; the other group found it difficult, if not impossible, to adapt to the social and economic conditions of the new land.

The newcomers preferred to reside and work in large cities. Their prime concern was to find suitable work and satisfactory renumeration. In the beginning many Armenians, especially skilled craftsmen, had little difficulty in finding favorable work. However, the unskilled laborer, very large in numbers at the outset, was fated to remain the major concern of the communities. Many of the early arrivals became petty street traders. Actually they were to enjoy a degree of economic success and become shopkeepers.

With an increasing commitment to the idea of remaining in America, young men who had achieved any degree of financial security, began to enter into marriage. Very few married non-Armenian women. A non-Armenian partner to intermarriage often found it hard to meet the needs of her husband with his nostalgia for the old country. The young children of such unions created an even deeper wound with their natural tendency to assimilate rapidly via the public school systems. Later, acquiring American citizenship and taking on new political allegiance, they recommitted themselves to adopting American customs and ideas more rapidly. Once the dream of returning to the homeland diminished, and the foundations for an Armenian ethnic community had been laid, the process of assimilation began.

1. Economic Adjustment

Many of the immigrants came to America penniless, friendless, and totally ignorant of the language and customs. Eventually, educators, artists, businessmen, and professionals also joined the caravan of immigrants. Many of them became laborers in the mines, mills, and factories. Those with special skills in the crafts found work in manufacturing plants while others made headway in small-scale businesses. The professionals were fortunate enough to be able to pursue their own field and to set up offices in their respective lines of employment.

They proved to be very industrious and wished to further themselves economically. Even the poorest itinerant peddler desired to make a place for himself in business. This sense of perservance and strong determination may explain the large numbers of grocers, confectioners, barbers, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, engravers, and printers that were found among the Armenians.

The Armenians also contributed significantly to the development of American intellectual and scientific interests. Many distinguished themselves in areas such as medicine, architecture, engineering, construction, manufacturing, business, and farming.[1] It was no small achievement for these immigrants to attain success, despite the diversity of conflicts and obstacles they had to face and overcome in their daily existence. They paved the road for their "American offspring" to enjoy the full advantages and security that America had to offer.

2. Family and Related Problems

Because of prevailing Armenian sentiment that many immigrants who departed for America would one day return to the homeland, women in general stayed home and did not take an active role in the immigration movement at the start. The absence of males among the village population reached alarming proportions. Entire villages were often inhabited only by defenseless children and women, left to fend against the marauding Turks and Kurds.

The immigrant males in the United States had several alternatives open to them. Some took as their mates young women of Armenian parentage born in the United States. Others either journeyed to the homeland in search of a wife, or, through correspondence with a friend or relative back home, secured a mate.[2] As a rule the Armenian immigrant wanted to marry an Armenian woman for the simple reason that he would be happier with a spouse of his own nationality and religious background.

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[1] Malcom, The Armenians in America, pp. 80-98.

[2] T'lgadints'i, "Badgeri Dghan," ("The Boy of the Picture"), Tzain Haireniatz, March 15, 1905, pp. 4-5.

Despite the great impact of these physical and psychological dislocations, certain aspects of Armenian family life continued to survive. Traditionally the family preserved its rigid purity and pious discipline as their ancient patriarchal structure. Love of home and children was strong and binding and supreme happiness existed in rearing a large family, teaching them habits of hard work, and providing for the future. Rarely did one find an Armenian father who was not eager to have his children receive a good modern education. Significantly, these traits, including interest in learning, could be observed among the peasant population.

Although the Armenian immigrant had much to be thankful for in the way of material prosperity, political and religious freedom, and educational opportunities, a serious cause of distress was the attitude of his children. Many parents were disturbed over the loss of the respect of their American-born children and painfully experienced the feeling of helplessness in the face of a situation which seemed beyond their control. What most distressed the immigrant parents was the refusal of the children to identify themselves with their parents' ethnic values.

3. Compromise with America

The difficulties encountered during the years following the new immigration were numerous. Even today some retain unhappy impressions of their experiences in the United States. Despite the obstacles, the majority of the immigrants learned enough English for their daily living. The young immigrants often combined long hours of work with evening study that gained them coveted degrees and licenses in medicine, law, engineering, and accounting.[1]

For some of the Armenian immigrants integration into American life was slow and painful. Adjustment to the rigors of an industrial society with its diverse customs and traditions made the immigrant feel inadequate to overcome the handicap of social adaptation. Coupled with this bewilderment was the lack of acceptance by old-stock Americans, which forced the immigrant to seek the company of his compatriots and to live in an American colony.

In the course of time the Armenians proved remarkably receptive to Americanization. Various American and Armenian-American organizations strongly urged immigrants to become

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[1] T. B. K., "Armenians as Citizens," Armenia, II (October, 1906), 17-18; "Osgeghēn Badehout'iwnner," ("Golden Opportunities"), The Gotchnag, October 12, 1912, pp. 973-975.

American citizens.[1] Efforts to learn English were increased. During the Spanish-American War and World War I abbreviated or Anglicized names became widespread. The Armenian-language press exhorted its readers to buy United States Government bonds and urged the youth to enlist in the Armed Forces.[2] Thousands of Armenians who had not decided to become citizens earlier volunteered and were accepted in the Armed Forces.

It was obvious that a compromise with America meant an attempt to break loose from the familiar past of the immigrant and to tackle things that were of the American way of life. This new life was a mixed blessing to the immigrant. To make that life more secure and familiar the Armenians transplanted some of the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the Old World into the New, while on the other hand adopting many new Western attitudes.

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[1] "Amerigahayě ew Amerigan," ("America and the American-Armenian"), The Gotchnag, April 17, 1912, pp. 397-399. "K'aghak'ats'i Eghēk'," ("Become a Citizen"), The Gotchnag, November 6, 1915, pp. 982-983.

[2] "Gadarets'ēk' Tser Bardaganout'iwně" ("Fulfill Your Duṯies"), The Taurus, February 28, 1918, pp. 129-130. "Inch' Gnē Ameriga; Inch' Grnank' Ĕnel Menk'", ("What is America Doing and What Can We Do?"), The Taurus, September 12, 1918, pp. 585-586.

G. Immigrant Organizations and Community Life

As much as the Armenian immigrant tried to become truly integrated with the larger American community, nevertheless, he also sought to maintain strong ties with his native land. To adjust emotionally to this new environment and to overcome loneliness, the immigrant stayed within the groups of his own nationality. Collectively, these Armenian immigrants could find consolation for their nostalgic feelings for the homeland. Within the immediate atmosphere of the neighborhood they found mutual protection and comfort in observing the same religious holidays, speaking the same language, sharing the same menu, and discussing subjects of common interest.

They established a variety of institutions and organizations within their communities which fulfilled their socio-cultural needs and also served as links with the "old country." These institutions gave continuity and security to their existence as an ethnic group. They built churches which conducted services in the mother tongue and set up Armenian schools. Political parties were organized and newspapers and magazines were published in Armenian. Societies and associations sponsored cultural and social activities to benefit the poor of the homeland. The men patronized the popular restaurants, coffeehouses, and clubs.

Among all these immigrant institutions the Church became the core of community life because it embodied everything Armenian. She preserved the national heritage from the "melting pot." Thus the immigrants invested in the Church everything they had. They generally considered the Church the soul of the nation and the citadel of Armenian spirit. The discussion of the Church *per se* will await the later chapters of this study. Here the nature of the other ethnic organizations must be suggested, for the Church evolved in interaction with the institutions to be discussed in the rest of this chapter.

1. Armenian Political Parties

By way of background it can be noted that after the fall of the Armenian Kingdom in 1375, from time to time either individuals or groups strove to regain freedom and equality for the Armenian people. These nationalistic efforts were often shared by the Armenian Church and churchmen who functioned both as a religious and intellectual force in the national struggle. Since her inception, the Armenian Church has been regarded as a stronghold for the preservation of religious and cultural endeavors of the Armenians, both in the homeland and diaspora. Curiously enough, the administration of the Church is shared by both clergy and laity. The laity often belonged to one or another of the political parties. In the new nationalism of the nineteenth century the revolutionary activities of the clergymen often became a source of spiritual and moral strength and inspiration.

In the nineteenth century the attention of the Armenian nationalists focussed on the liberation of the six provinces of Turkish Armenia from Ottoman yoke. The European revolutionary movements of 1830 and 1848 inspired the young Armenian nationalists. The first manifestation of the Armenian revolutionary movement against the Ottoman regime came in 1862 at Zeitun. In the following decades Armenian revolutionary leaders concerned themselves with international socialism. Numerous revolutionary organizations and secret political parties were formed on Turkish, Russian, and Persian soil.

First among these political parties was the Armenagan Party, originating in Van, Turkey, in 1885 with a program of perpetuation of the education of the Armenians and self-protection. This Party avoided the use of terroristic tactics and remained aloof from socialistic principles.

The Hnch'ag Revolutionary Party was formed in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1887 by seven Russian Armenian students of Marxist persuasion. These young people were in their twenties and the sons of bourgeoise families. Their view of the new society was based on humanitarian and socialistic principles. To achieve national independence for Turkish Armenia they were willing to bear arms if necessary. After the political freedom of Turkish Armenia was won, political and social aims were put into operation by the Hnch'ag Party. Their centralized organization was ready to carry out their immediate objectives against the Ottoman government by way of propaganda, agitation, and terrorism.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, commonly known as the Tashnag Party, was the product of a merger among various Armenian revolutionary groups, primarily in Russia and Persia. The political unification of these groups was achieved in 1890 in Tiflis, Georgia. Unlike the Hnch'ag Party, the Tashnag Party advocated Armenian reforms within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, resorting to rebellion, if need be, to achieve the political and economic freedom of Turkish Armenia. The platform of the Tashnag Party contained socialistic principles and decentralization was considered essential to the smooth operation of the various branches of the Party. Like the Hnch'ag Party, the Tashnag Party advocated the use of force and terrorism to achieve its aims. Both parties, but the Tashnag to a greater degree, made the bourgeoise class and clergy targets of their propaganda, depicting them as exploiters of the working class. Clergymen often fell victim to the annihilation policy of these two groups.

The Reformed Hnch'ag Party (Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party) was the result of a split within the ranks of the Hnch'ag Revolutionary Party in 1896. The causes of dissension were socialism and differences in strategy. The dissenters objected to the inclusion of socialistic principles in the party's platform and also criticized indiscriminate fighting. The "Old Wing Hnch'ags" were also critizes for their failures in party administration. The dissenting group also found socialism incompatible for the freedom of Turkish Armenia. Consequently, these dissenters formed their own group, the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party, in 1898.

The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Rhamgavar Azadagan Party) was organized in September, 1921, in Constantinople, Turkey. Its roots date back to October, 1908, when a segment of the Armenagan Party and the Armenian Union (those who favored a union between the Old Hnch'ag Party and Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party), called the Ideological Union, merged with the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party to form the Armenian Constitutional Democratic Party (Hay Sahmanatragan Rhamgavar Gousagts'out'iwn).[1] This latter group, in 1921, joined the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party to form the Rhamgavar Azadagan Party. The Rhamgavar Party remained apart from extreme political activities and adopted a conservative course. It subscribed to cultural, charitable, and religious services for the national welfare of the Armenian people and was anti-revolutionary and anti-socialistic.

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[1] Ardak Tarpinian, Hay Azadagan Sharzhman Verchi Ōrērēn ("From the Days of the Armenian Movement for Liberation") (Paris: Arax-Topalian Printers, 1947), p. 192.

The Armenian political parties were introduced into the United States at varying intervals. First among these was the Hnch'ag Revolutionary Party in 1892; then followed the Tashnag Party in 1898; and in 1908 the Sahmanatragan Rhamgavar Party.[1] Because of their radical ideas, these political parties often were critized by the Armenian communities here and abroad. In their revolutionary radicalism and anti-clerical secularism, the Hnch'ag and Tashnag Parties often antagonized many Armenians. The parties themselves, although apathetic to the mission of the Church and clergy, wished to control the church institution as a grip over the people.[2]

Unfortunately, the Armenian Church became involved in the impassioned politics of these contending parties. These party disputes infected the Armenian communities throughout the United States and were carried on with increasing bitterness. Community after community became divided because of these quarreling factions which, either deliberately or incidentally, endeavoured to control the Church or to strip the Church of her influence over the people and to render her ineffective.

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[1] Manoug K. Jismējian, Badmout'iwn Amerigahay K'aghak'agan Gousagts'out'eants' ("History of Armenian-American Political Parties") (Fresno: Noror Press, 1950), p. ix; Malcom, The Armenians in America, pp. 118-119; Sarkis Atamian, The Armenian Community (New York: Philosophical Library Press, 1955), p. 354.

[2] For further readings consult [Leo] A. Papakhanian, T'iwrk'ahay Heghap'okhout'ean Kaghap'arapanout'iwne ("The Ideology of the Turkish Armenian Revolution") 2 vols. (Paris: Bahri Brothers Press, 1934, 1935); Louise Nalbandian, The Armenian Revolutionary Movement (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963); James Mandalian, ed., Armenian Freedom Fighters: The Memoirs of Rouben Der Minasian (Boston: Hairenik Association Press, 1963).

Despite these negative aspects, the political parties had a positive influence upon the people as well. They often sponsored social and cultural functions and maintained political clubs called agoumpner where adherents of each party gathered. However, the party leaders were unwilling to put aside their personal and ideological feuds. Though they saw themselves as heroes, many Armenians deplored their unwillingness to submerge personal interests in the higher interests of the community at large. The result was controversy.

Regardless of the role played by the parties, one thing was certain--the immigrant generations could not help but sympathize with the revolutionary causes. On the other hand their U.S.-born children could hardly be expected to be interested in something which was not of "Armenian politics." Every immigrant organization, at one time or another, would have to confront this frustration.

2. The Armenian Language Press

The Armenian language press was indispensable to the life of the Armenian community. It served as the bridge between the Old World and the New and provided the immigrant with valuable information concerning events in the old country. It also helped him to become better acquainted with things American, thus facilitating his adjustment.

The major newspapers were owned either by individuals or by political organizations, while a few relatively insignificant religious periodicals were also published. Some papers did more harm than good by publishing news, articles, and editorials which generated new dissension among the people. The political papers, especially, served to divide the Armenian populace beyond repair, often involving the Armenian Church in their quarrels.[1]

Generally the Armenian language newspapers faded away as rapidly as they appeared, with the exception of two. These are still in publication today and are entitled the Hairenik ("Fatherland") and the Baikar ("Struggle").[2] Both papers are published in Boston and serve as the official organs of two rival political parties, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnags) and the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Rhamgavars).

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[1] "Mamoulě ew Mer Marminnerě," ("The Press and Our National Organizations"), The Taurus, August 1, 1918, pp. 506-507; "Och' Heghap'okhagan Kordz Mě" ("A Non-Revolutionary Activity"), Hairenik, July 13, 1907, p. 1.

[2] The Baikar was first published as Tzain Haireniatz ("Voice of the Fatherland") in 1899 and assumed its present name in 1922. Hairenik has also been published since 1899.

The first Armenian language paper in the United States was the Arekag ("Sun"), published in 1888 in Jersey City, and edited by Haygaz Ēginian.[1] The second paper was Ararad founded in New York in 1891. It was a short-lived weekly which had an English section designed to attract English speaking readers.[2] The Haik was another of the earlier papers in the United States. Its editor was Dr. M. S. Gabriel whose editorial policy was strongly moralistic. He was bitterly opposed by the revolutionary press. The last issue of the Haik appeared in 1898.

In 1899 two weeklies appeared, entitled Tzain Haireniatz and Hairenik. Both were first published in New York and subsequently in Boston. The first paper represented the Veragazmeal Hnchag Party and the other the Tashnag Party. Both enjoyed popularity and were influential within their own circles. From their inception these two papers have been engaged in a bitter journalistic struggle and have not as yet given signs of reconciling their differences.[3]

The Gotchnag ("Bell") appeared in Boston in 1900 and remained a very conservative paper, remaining aloof from all controversial issues.[1] It enjoyed the support of the Armenian Protestant Missionary Association. In 1918 The Taurus appeared, which pursued a moderate course in community affairs.

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[1] Arsēn Diran, "Amerigahay Mamoulě," ("The Armenian-American Press"), Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1912, pp. 127-129.

[2] Ibid., pp. 127-128.

[3] Ibid., p. 135.

Armenia, appearing in 1906, was an English language monthly edited by Arshag Dēr Mahdēsian. This monthly advocated the propagation of Armenian literature, culture, and history, hoping to gain the cooperation and friendship of leading personnel of the "Friends of America" Society, especially that of Mrs. Alice Stone Blackwell, well-known editor of Woman's Journal.

The Armenian press faced many difficulties in the United States. The reading audience was very limited, largely limited to the first generation. The second generation never showed much enthusiasm for the Armenian newspapers, either being unable or unwilling to read them, thus leaving the fate of Armenian journalism in the United States in a precarious situation.[2]

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[1] R. S. Eacoubian, "Amerigahayn ou ir Mamoulĕ," ("The Armenian of America and His Press"), The Gotchnag, September 28, 1912, pp. 925-927; October 5, 1912, pp. 949-951.

[2] Due to the fact that this chapter deals with the period that covers events until 1920, no exhaustive list of newspapers and periodicals will be presented here. For further readings on the topic, the reader is asked to consult Malcom, The Armenians in America, pp. 120-124.

The Armenian language papers often provided criticism of those clergymen who did not support their particular ideology. The non-political papers were less biased toward the clergy. In general, the press reported very little of church life, this being overshadowed by intense political involvement. What was reported would appear in columns devoted to news releases issued by the Diocese.

3. Societies and Associations

Numerous societies and associations called hayrenagts'aganner ("compatriotic associations") played an important part in the life of the communities. In most instances these organizations worked closely with local Armenian churches to carry on their educational and charitable activities.

Nearly every district or province from which the immigrants had emigrated was represented in the United States by a society or association which bore the name of the particular village from whence they came. These societies, however, were short-lived and with some exceptions died out almost as quickly as they were started. Other organizations were longer-lived.

The major task of these organizations was the collection of funds to support schools, orphanages, hospitals, and the needy in the homeland. A portion of the money was allocated for the improvement of native churches and other sites.

Many of the local associations also rendered invaluable social services to the early immigrants in America. Among these were the Armenian Educational Society founded in 1906, the Armenian Colonial Association of New York founded in 1909, and the Armenian Students' Association founded in 1910.[1]

The Armenian Red Cross, later known as the Armenian Relief Society, a charitable and benevolent women's auxiliary of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, accomplished significant deeds of merit during World War I and the Cilician campaign of 1922. They have since been reduced to the role of localized women's auxiliaries of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

Founded sixty-six years ago on April 15, 1906 in Cairo, Egypt, was the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). This organization distinguished itself by its charitable, cultural, and philanthropic endeavors. Vahan K'iwrk'jian founded the first chapter of the AGBU in the United States in 1908. The AGBU's activities of relief and rehabilitation after World War I included providing food, clothing, and shelter for countless Armenian refugees in Middle Eastern and European countries.

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[1] For further readings refer to Malcom, *The Armenians in America*, pp. 113-118; A. Ayvazian, "Amerigahay Ĕngerayin Gazmagerbout'iwnerĕ", ("The Social Organizations of the Armenians of America"), *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1912, pp. 168-184; Bedros Norhad, *The Armenian General Benevolent Union* (New York: Lydian Press, 1965), pp. 48-65.

In retrospect, the formation of the foregoing societies in the life of the various Armenian communities sprang from the urgent appeals emanating from the homeland. Some came to prominence and rendered much needed assistance to the people of the homeland; others, with the passage of time, faded away into oblivion; still others are alive and continuing their work in today's technological environment. All of them were related or had to come to terms with the Church if they were to function effectively.

4. Armenian Language Schools

The perpetuation of the Armenian language as the liturgical language, as a means of communication between parents and their children and as an element of national heritage, had high priority for the immigrant. Up to the First World War, the community seems to have displayed more genuine interest in preserving the Armenian language than in recent times.

Teaching Armenian to American-born children created major problems, both for parents and children. First there was the danger of antagonizing the children. To this day, many individuals still recall their unpleasant childhood experiences in learning the language. Secondly, the community leaders faced difficulties in locating competent teachers, acceptable books, adequate classroom facilities, and the necessary financial means to operate the schools.

Both religious and lay leaders were most anxious to do something about the language problem lest their children lose knowledge of Armenian altogether. The problem basically stemmed from the inability to project the intrinsic value of learning Armenian to the children.

In each locality that maintained a church and priest, Armenian classes were held in the basement of the church, with the priest usually serving as teacher. Where there were no church facilities available, classes were accommodated in community centers, rented halls, backs of Armenian clubs, or even vacant stores. Children of various ages were crowded into one classroom and instruction was usually given late in the afternoon, after the public school day had ended. Much criticism was heard from all corners. Children complained because of the surroundings and the lateness of time. Most of them attended simply to satisfy the desire of their immigrant parents or because they had no choice in the matter. This new generation seemed satisfied to have no other language but English and no other country but America.

Predictably these feeble attempts to perpetuate the Armenian language were unsuccessful. Fluency in the language has declined steadily. Not until the decade of the 1960s was there a concerted movement to revive the teaching of Armenian. This has manifested itself through the establishment of several full-time Armenian schools in large urban centers. However, it is too early to tell about the success of this new experiment.

5. Armenian Restaurants and Coffeehouses

The appearance of restaurants and coffeehouses in the Armenian neighborhoods seemed to be the logical solution to the problems of loneliness and entertainment confronting the newcomers. The Armenian preferred dining where he would be able to obtain his ethnic food and to hear his native tongue spoken by people of his own kind.

No large investment was required to operate a restaurant or coffeehouse. Exclusively male in patronage, they served as community centers after working hours, where newcomers would go to meet their compatriots and to exchange views of the day. Often the walls of these places were decorated with portraits of Armenian national heroes and church leaders. In these coffeehouses the newcomers could find their favorite menus, including Turkish coffee and other native delicacies. They became social centers in every Armenian settlement.[1]

News of the homeland, impromptu political discussions, news of church affairs and the clergy, and reminiscing with friends were the main attractions. As time passed and many

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[1] "Nshmarner," ("Observations"), The Gotchnag, February 6, 1909, pp. 123-124; "Haygagan Srjarane," ("The Armenian Coffeehouse"), The Gotchnag, July 24, 1909, p. 705.

Armenians found economic well-being and formed homes and families, these restaurants and coffeehouses began to disappear, giving way to political clubs called agoump, sponsored by the different political parties. These also became centers of activity for the community, but could never replace the Church in her importance in the daily life of the community. Among all these organizations the Church stood out as central in terms of pervasiveness of her presence in the community life.

H. Summary and Conclusion

Armenian immigrants came to the United States as early as the seventeenth century. First among these was one "Martin the Armenian," who, with other Armenian workingmen, arrived in Jamestown Colony in 1618. In 1653 two Armenian silkworm cultivators were brought to Virginia Colony. From 1653 on, historical records concerning Armenian immigration to the United States are obscure until the year 1834 when an Armenian student, Khach'adour Osganian, made his way from Constantinople to New York. Soon other students, merchants, workers, and opportunists also came to these shores. Until 1882 these newcomers all were single males, ranging in ages from sixteen to thirty. Few of them intended to make America their permanent home.

In addition to a universal desire for adventure and greater opportunity, a chief cause for Armenian immigration to America was political and religious persecutions at the hands of the Turks from 1894 to 1896 and again, in 1909 and 1915. The tragic massacres perpetrated upon the Armenian people during these years claimed the lives of more than two and one-half million men, women, and children. Wave upon wave of Armenians broke on the American shores as Armenians fled from Turkish tyranny and depravity to America. The immigration movement was motivated by economic causes as well.

"America fever" was still another cause for immigration, prompted not only by a desire for material betterment, but also by an eagerness to reach a legendary utopia of bliss. Three major factors contributed to the influence of "America fever." First of these was the "America letters" sent by previous immigrants to the homeland, vividly portraying the wonders of the New World, inspiring friends and relatives to emigrate. The second factor was the advertisements and efforts of steamship companies, railway companies, money lenders, and labor agents who flocked to both European and Middle Eastern cities to promote travel to the United States among prospective immigrants. A third factor were the tales narrated by the immigrants who had returned to the homeland after having been in America. These factors, compounded by the intolerable conditions under the Turks, caused Armenians to emigrate to the New World in tens of thousands by any means they could.

The Armenian immigrants brought with them memories and experiences from the Old World. They were determined to carry on their heritage in their new environment in America. They established a variety of institutions and organizations within their communities which fulfilled their socio-cultural needs and also served as links with the Old Country. These institutions gave continuity and security to their existence as an ethnic group. They built churches which conducted services in the mother tongue and set up Armenian schools. Political parties were organized and newspapers and magazines were published in the Armenian language. Societies and associations sponsored cultural and social activities to benefit the poor of the homeland. The men frequented the popular restaurants and coffeehouses.

Among all these immigrant institutions, the Church became the core of community life because she alone embodied everything Armenian. She preserved the national heritage from becoming part of the American "melting pot." The immigrants invested everything they had in the Church. They generally considered the Church the soul of the nation and the citadel of Armenian spirit.

At this point it is necessary to turn to an examination of the facts, events, and personalities who helped establish the Armenian Church in the United States. The transplanting of the Church, like other national and minority churches, by and for the immigrants, introduced American society to one of the earliest genres of Christianity about which it was relatively uninformed. The Armenian Church brought with her certain poetic values by way of the legends and history that surrounded her. These values became the mainstay of her children and their _raison d'être_.

Thus it was the Armenian immigrants or _bantoukhdner_ who gathered in large numbers to build a church in Worcester in 1891, so they might hear their mother speak to them in their native tongue. It was to be the beginning of a new chapter in the history of her people.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUAL PASTORATE IN AMERICA (1888-1898)

The starting point of Armenian Church history in the United States was Worcester, Massachusetts, where Armenian immigrants had already established a settlement in the closing years of the 1880s. Under the strange conditions of their new surroundings, the immigrants found their path beset with many difficulties. These problems, both from within and without the fold, retarded the development of religious consciousness. However, despite these manifold obstacles, the children's pennies, the widow's mite, and the laborer's contribution of both time and money made it possible in February of 1890 to purchase a small parcel of land on Laurel Street and in the same year to build a small wooden church. The Worcester Telegram sent reporters to cover the story because it was so difficult to comprehend that a mere handful of Armenians could actually start an Armenian Church.[1] Inner necessities more than external pressures made it mandatory for the immigrants to endow their native church with the spiritual values of their forefathers.

In this first period in the history of the church in the United States, confusion, dissension, and a lack of centralized authority prevailed. Many capable individuals were denied participation in church affairs while other more ambitious men worked to outdo each other. The meaning of democracy was misinterpreted and some even used the church as a means to further their own ambitions. No definite division of duties existed in the administrative life of the church between pastor and lay workers. Often "trusteeism" and politics plagued church affairs.

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[1] John Aroian, mimeographed article, printed in Arlington, Mass., November, 1972.

Generally the priests were underpaid and as poor as the immigrants themselves. Most were men of humility and piety, although there were others who did use the office of the priesthood simply as a means for material gain. Unfortunate indeed was the pastor whose religious ideas and political preferences ran counter to those of a board member, vocal minority, or faction.

This period of the spiritual pastorate in America witnessed the efforts of three pastors sent by the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Catholicos of All-Armenians in Ēchmiadzin, Armenia.[1] During these years the church in Worcester came under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Later, in 1898, it was transferred to the jurisdiction of Ēchmiadzin. Then the pastorate became elevated to a Diocesan establishment, which created many difficulties for the Worcester Church and made imperative the need for a bishop. It was hoped that he would be able to usher in an era of peace and order. But this was not to be the case for a long time.

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[1] Information concerning church beginnings in Worcester and the activities of the first two spiritual pastors, Sarajian and Dērounian, is lacking because of the loss of church documents. This is further complicated by the unavailability of Armenian language papers.

A. Need for a Native Church

The average American by the end of the nineteenth century had very rarely heard of an Armenian. Even prominent journalists, clergymen, professors, and statesmen regarded the Armenians either as "Christianized Turks," or else confused them with Arminians--the followers of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609).[1] Rejection and agitation by hostile neighbors such as the Irish and Italian, no less than the activities of proselytism by both American and Armenian Protestants, convinced the Armenians of their need for a native church.[2] To belong to a religious community and to be identified with it became a social necessity. This was the road they wished to pursue. John Aroian, the son of one of the founders of the Worcester Church, relates that these "foreigners" attended the Swedish Church on Sundays. Pastor Gundaarson of this church was most sympathetic to the cause of the Armenians and often expressed his thoughts and feelings concerning the treatment of these people.

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[1] Arshag Mahdesian, "Armenia, Her Culture and Aspirations," The New Armenia, XIV (March-April, 1922), 23-26; (May-June, 1922), 43-45.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigay Darets'oytsě, 1913, pp. 48-49.

> I know you Armenians are the oldest Christians, but folks in Worcester have never heard of you and do not know this. You will be subjected to continuous abuse and beatings until you found an Armenian Church here.[1]

Although a meritorious suggestion, nevertheless it was difficult to comprehend the probability of such an endeavor. The hour for decision was approaching and the immigrants knew well that deeds speak louder than words. The church, more than any other immigrant institution, would become the mainstay of their lives. She symbolized their national aspirations and memories of the life left behind. A true Armenian, felt the immigrant, was one who was loyal both to his religious faith and to his fatherland. Loyalty to Armenia implied loyalty to the church. The two were indivisible.

1. The Formation of the Armenian Club (1888)

Up to the middle of the year 1888 most immigrants of Armenian Church persuasion participated in functions sponsored by Protestant ministers and churches. Some became members of various denominations, and proselytizing activities were pursued by both American and Armenian Protestant ministers. One such minister, Asadour Antrēasian, was infamous among the Armenians for his seemingly anti-national activities.[1] To resist his efforts, the Armenians banded under the leadership of Mik'ayel T'op'hanēlian, an Armenian immigrant from Constantinople.

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[1] John Aroian, mimeographed article, printed in Arlington, Mass., November, 1972.

Another incident prompting the formation of the Armenian Club occurred in September, 1888, with the arrival in Worcester of Mgrdich' P'ort'oukalian, a well-known revolutionary leader. P'ort'oukalian was also the editor of a Marseilles weekly, the Armenia, and was in America to address the Armenian community.[2] On September 3, 1888, P'ort'oukalian was to address the populace of Worcester and the Armenians requested the use of the facilities of the Protestant church on Summer Street. Both the Armenian preacher, Antrēasian, and the American minister denied the Armenians their request, the latter announcing that "I cannot open the House of God before revolutionary Armenians."[3]

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[1] Jizmējian, Badmout'iwn Amerigahay K'aghak'agan Gousagts'out'eants', pp. 7-8.

[2] Dikran Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch ("Armenian Clergy in America"), (New York, 1945), pp. 6-7, pp. 114-116.

[3] Jizmējian, Badmout'iwn Amerigahay K'aghak'agan Gousagts'out'eants', pp. 8-9; Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch, p. 6; Babalē, "Veradzǎnount," ("Renaissance"), Armenia, May 23, 1906.

Consequently, the Armenians were forced to lease a small hall on Main Street and to conduct their lectures and meetings there. P'ort'oukalian's delivery was very dynamic and patriotic, urging the people to consider seriously forming their own native church.

> Regardless to what extent the Armenians are persecuted in Muslim lands, nevertheless they have been able to preserve their nationality and their church. But in Christian lands, especially America, there exist numerous obstacles which are detrimental to the preservation of nationality and religion. Accordingly you must make every effort to found your own church. Wherever the Armenian has gone he has taken with him his church, his press, and his school. Without these three integral forces, he cannot preserve his identity.[1]

P'ort'oukalian's speech inspired the people to hold a preliminary meeting that same evening during which they elected a standing committee whose task was to be the organizing of a society. The members of this committee were Hovhannēs Eazejian, Mardiros T'omajanian, Ōhan T'ashjian, Hagop K'sdigian, and Mik'ayēl T'op'hanēlian, the chairman. Under the leadership and guidance of these men the first of the national organizations of the Worcester community had its birth, the Gajarh Haygagan or Armenian Club.[2]

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[1] P'arhnag A. Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ew Egeghets'aganout'iwnĕ (1888-1911)," ("The Armenian Church of America and the Priesthood (1888-1911)"), Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ē, 1912, p. 106; Jismējian, Badmout'iwn Amerigahay K'aghak'agan Gousagts'out'eants', p. 8; Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch, pp. 6-7; Dedication of the Cultural Center of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, December 8, 1968, Worcester, Mass.

[2] Jizmējian, Badmout'iwn Amerigahay K'aghak'agan Gousagts'out'eants', p. 9; Dedication of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, December 8, 1968, Worcester, Mass.

The first membership meeting of the Armenian Club was held on September 16, 1888, at 418 Main Street, Worcester. Once again the members emphasized the need for having their own church. Controversy arose over the matter concerning membership of Armenians of Protestant inclination. This, compounded with differences over administrative procedures, only intensified the disparity among brethren. Generally the meetings were scheduled for Sundays and were preceded by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the Credo.

The issue of extending membership to Armenian Protestants was resolved at a meeting held on October 7, 1888, during which the members of the Armenian Club unanimously voted to exclude them from membership in their organization. As a result the Armenian Protestants formed a separate organization under the leadership of Asadour Antrēasian. Opposition to this group was strong, the main source of conflict stemming from T'op'hanēlian and his supporters. Religious intolerance existed in both camps and disputes and arguments were many, draining energies and shortening tempers on both sides. The situation was most explosive and erupted with the filing of a petition with the Turkish Embassy in Washington by the Armenian Protestants.[1] They alleged that the members of the Armenian Club were engaged in revolutionary activities and in anti-Sultan propaganda. This was to have far-reaching repercussions.

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[1] Although the original document does not survive, reference is made to it in Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, pp. 53-54.

2. Letter to Constantinople

The news of this petition spread rapidly among the Armenians in Worcester and needless to say caused much apprehension and anxiety. More than their own security, they feared for that of their families and relatives in the homeland, who were still subject to Ottoman authority. T'op'hanēlian was designated to depart for Washington as an envoy for the Armenian Club and to mediate with the Ambassador.

Simultaneously an explanatory letter, dated November 3, 1888, was dispatched to the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Patriarch Khorēn Ashĕkian. The signers requested his intercession with the Sublime Porte on their behalf. The Patriarch's response was prompt in a letter dated December 13, 1888, in which he advised the Armenians of Worcester that the Patriarchate would be able to extend its jurisdiction over them only through spiritual officials or clergy and thus defend them before the Imperial Government. He continued, "It is necessary that a clergyman exist... then the National Patriarchate can enforce its jurisdiction over the Armenian colony with more determination and confidence."[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The letter created an aura of optimism and encouragement among the Worcester settlers and expedited their decision to obtain a priest of their own. A second letter was forwarded to the Patriarch on January 27, 1889, restating the request and indicating the benefits to be gained by the presence of a pastor, not only in Worcester but in other cities throughout the United States where Armenians were residing in sizable numbers. The letter concluded with the sentiment that the pastor, "... according to majority opinion is desired to be a celibate priest rather than a married clergyman."[1]

3. Brothers at Opposite Poles

The efforts of the Armenian Club to secure a clergyman created mixed feelings among the Worcester populace. Those who did not share the joy and optimism of the Club members argued that the presence of an Armenian priest in the United States might create undesirable situations in communities.[2]

One dissenting faction were the Armenian Protestants who were most anxious to have Cyrus Hamlin intercede and convince T'op'hanēlian not to proceed with his plans of securing a pastor. Another source of opposition emanated from the Armenian Union of New York which resolutely asserted that the Armenian Club had no right to act independently since it was subject to the policies and regulations of the Union.[1] All efforts to persuade the Club members to this way of thinking were in vain as the Armenian Club was determined to preserve its independence and identity.

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1913, p. 56; M. T'op'hanēlian, "T'ght'agts'out'iwn," ("Report to Pountc"), *Pountc*, January 28, 1889.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1913, p. 57.

There followed a period during which letters were exchanged between the two organizations. The New York group wished to send a delegation to Worcester for further talks and negotiations concerning the problem of the clergyman. The Armenian Club complied with their wishes and extended an invitation to the delegates, with the understanding that they would have to abide by the limits and rules set by the Armenian Club.[2] The Armenian Club further pursued a policy of excluding Armenian Protestants from actively participating in the organization to counteract Protestant propaganda which was so rampant in the communities. This policy remained in effect until the arrival of the priest.

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[1] The Armenian Union, founded on February 13, 1886, in New York tried to establish a bond among Armenians in America. It fostered functions for the benefit of the Armenian Community and cultivated national sentiment. For further readings see "Haygagan Miout'iwn Hameriga" ("Armenian Union in America"), Haik, February 15, 1891, pp. 28-29; Hovhannēs Arshagouni, "Niw-Eork'i Haygagan Miout'iwn," ("The Armenian Union of New York"), Arax, July 14, 1906, pp. 292-293; A. Ayvazian, "Amerigahay Ĕngerayin Gazmagerbout'iwnnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, pp. 170, 174-176.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, pp. 57-58.

B. The First Superior: Father Hovsēp' Sarajian (1889-1893)

A letter dated January 8, 1889, was sent by the Armenian Club to the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, Patriarch Khorēn Ashěkian, appealing for a spiritual pastor to be sent to Worcester. The Patriarch submitted the letter to the Religious Council for immediate consideration upon which the Council designated Father Hovsēp' Sarajian as the first pastor of the Armenian Church in the United States.[1]

From fragmentary reports it is possible to depict Father Sarajian as a man of medium height and slight build, nearly forty years old. He was born in Constantinople and received his religious training at the Seminary of St. James in Jerusalem.[2] He seems to have been a sincere, modest, and unselfish person who displayed an abiding and immense love for his flock. There is little information available concerning his journey to the United States other than the fact that a sum of forty dollars was sent to H. Ip'ēgian in New York with instructions to play host to the priest upon his arrival. A delegation from Worcester was also sent to welcome the pastor. However, immediately after his disembarkation at Castle Island on July 22, 1889 (according to T'ophanēlian) or July 25, 1889 (according to Seropian), Father Sarajian left for Worcester, passing unnoticed, without having contacted his welcoming committee.[1]

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[1] K. Pambouk'ian, comp., "Niwt'er Amerigahay Kaghout'i Badmout'ean Hamar," ("Materials Concerning the History of the Armenians of America") (Constantinople: Unpublished Material from the Archives of the National Patriarchate, 1972), p. 1.

[2] Ashjian, *Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn Arhachnortagan T'emin Hayots' Amerigayi*, p. 18; Mgount, *Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch*, p. 7. Biographical data concerning Father Sarajian's life prior to his arrival in America is not available. His pastorate which lasted until 1893 will be treated in Chapter IV. Information of the years between 1894, his departure from America, and 1898, his return, is scanty except for the fact that he served in the Diocese of Adrbadagan, Persia. The period of his primacy (1898-1906) up until the time of his demise in 1913 is discussed in subsequent chapters.

Thus Father Sarajian began his labors among his immigrant flock. One American reporter described the newly arrived pastor as a person "... who appears on the streets in his odd fitting priestly robes and a queer shaped purple velvet head cover."[2] The reporter's comments were hardly reassuring to the newcomer; they fell short of a warm welcome.

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, pp. 61-62; M. T'ophanēlian, "T'ght'agts'out'iwn," ("Report") Pountc, August 5, 1889.

[2] "A Native Priest Among Them," Worcester Telegram, July 29, 1889.

1. The Celebration of the First Armenian Divine Liturgy in America

The Armenian immigrants of Worcester, long deprived of the spiritual nourishment of their own faith and church, attended the initial *Badarak* or Divine Liturgy in large numbers. Several non-Armenian individuals were also in attendance. The services were held at the Reform Club Hall on Main Street on July 29, 1899.[1]

The services opened with the reading and presentation of Father Sarajian's credentials by the president of the Armenian Club, T'op'hanēlian. The Patriarchal Encyclical or *Gontag* was also read. As the faithful stood in wrapt attention and awe they heard the words which designated Father Sarajian as the duly appointed spiritual superior of America, responsible not only for Worcester, but for Boston, Jersey City, New York, and other centers of Armenian settlement. Despite the large numbers in attendance, approximately 324 people, the collection plates contained but a mere twenty-seven cents.[2]

That same evening the Armenian Club tendered a reception for the new pastor at Temperance Hall on Main Street. The best wishes of the Club were conveyed to Father Sarajian by

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," 1913, p. 62; *Worcester Telegram*, July 29, 1899; *Dedication of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center*, December 8, 1968, Worcester, Mass.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1913, p. 67; T'op'hanēlian, "T'ght'agts'out'iwn," *Pountc*, August 5, 1889.

President T'op'hanēlian, who also pledged full cooperation from the people of Worcester who had waited so long to secure the services of a priest who would speak to them in their native tongue. Now that Father Sarajian would assume the presidency of the Club, T'op'hanēlian submitted his resignation and Father Sarajian was given a vote of confidence by those assembled.

Father Sarajian's speech expressed happiness at the state of affairs he found in Worcester. He expressed the hope that the people would continue to work in harmony and good-will for the betterment of all. At the close of the meeting the new pastor was given a standing ovation after which the immigrants filed to the platform to kiss his hand, as is customary in the Armenian Church. One thought dominated their minds as they left for home. Without further delay, steps had to be taken to secure permanent quarters in which to hold services. The Armenian Church in America was in the making!

2. The Formation of the First Church Trustees

The Church Trustees became a more vital and integral part of the Church than was the Armenian Club. It exerted its influence not only in the affairs of the Church but in the life of the entire Armenian community as well. Its members were responsible for the financial management of the Church and for the hiring and firing of the parish priest.

At the time when Father Sarajian assumed his post in Worcester a strong nationalistic atmosphere prevailed among the people. The political parties, especially the Hnchag and Tashnag, were particularly active and did not wish to come under the control of ecclesiastical regulations. The immigrant, in his turn, hardened by years away from his ancestral home, had developed an aggressiveness and individualism difficult to manage. Thus Father Sarajian had many obstacles to overcome in his work of organizing the Church Trustees in Worcester.

The first body of Church Trustees appointed by Father Sarajian consisted of seven members. From the inception of the group, much dissension occurred because of those aspirants who had not been elected to this administrative office. This "trusteeism" compelled Father Sarajian to increase the membership of the Trustees to twelve. The members were Kēork T'ashjian, Kēork Awedisian, Eaghoub T'orosian, Garabed T'ashjian, Minas Aroyian, Mardiros Baghdigian, Mardiros Gjigian, Hovhannēs M. Krikorian, Hovhannēs Eaghjian, Nazar Norsigian, and Baghdasar T'ashjian. At the first meeting held on August 20, 1899, Garabed T'ashjian was elected chairman, Mardiros Baghdigian, secretary, and Minas Aroyian, treasurer.[1] As the first order of business, Father

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, p. 68; Dedication of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, December 8, 1968.

Sarajian was given the responsibility of preparing a set of by-laws. A sub-committee was elected to provide the pastor's annual salary, an amount of five hundred dollars. Other policies were adopted for fund raising procedures and for administering financial assistance to charitable organizations.

This pattern of church organization and administration established in Worcester became the prototype for other communities to follow.

3. Need of Pastoral Visitation

Pastoral visitation was one of the most deeply felt needs among the Armenians. Armenian colonies throughout the United States were unorganized and were like "flocks without a shepherd." Some immigrants attended services of local churches on Sundays, but the vast majority were sorely neglected in terms of their spiritual nourishment. Thus Father Sarajian's arrival filled a deep need. He labored fervently for days and weeks, making visitations to the communities along the Eastern coast.

On September 1, 1889, the pastor celebrated Divine Liturgy at Paine Memorial Hall in Boston. Following the services, he baptized the child of K. Ēk'sērjian; this was the first Armenian baptism to take place in the New World.[1]

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[1] Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egheghets'aganout'iwnĕ, Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 107.

Father Sarajian continued his travels and celebrated Divine Liturgy in various Armenian communities, usually using the facilities of the Protestant Episcopal Churches. It ought to be noted that from the outset the Episcopalian Church in America manifested a keen interest in the Armenian immigrants. The Reverend T. J. Lacey has said: "The Episcopal Church has recognized a protective responsibility toward these people, owing to the close resemblance between the Armenian Church and our own."[1] The Armenians were freely offered the use of Episcopalian Churches for their church services. This way of helpfulness chosen by the Episcopalians was not a small virtue in view of the instances of proselytism conducted by churches of other faiths among the immigrant communities. Reverend Lacey further observes the following about the opportunities created by the Episcopal Church.

> Our Church aims to stand in a relation of helpfulness to these Armenian brethren, endeavouring to strengthen them in their own church rather than to win them to ours.[2]

To express appreciation for this genuine interest displayed by the Episcopal Church, the Armenian Patriarch Khorēn Ashekian sent a letter to Bishop Potter on behalf of the Patriarchate and the Armenian communities in the United

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[1] T. J. Lacey, Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. (2nd ed.; New York: Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 1920), pp. 77-78; Thomas J. Lacey, "Our Armenian Neighbors," The New Armenia, XI (January, 1919), 1-2.

[2] Lacey, Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., p. 80.

States. The letter was well received by the Episcopalians and was reproduced in *The Churchman*, an Episcopalian-supported periodical.

Upon the completion of his visitations, Father Sarajian returned to Worcester to continue the work he had started there. The temporary quarters in which church services were held were proving to be inadequate and the need for a more permanent place of worship was indeed imperative. Sentiment was strong for the building of a church in Worcester.

4. Building the First Armenian Church (1891)

As the stream of immigration to America grew steadily community leaders became more concerned with the erection of a church building. While this project offered much promise for the future, it also became the source of community tension and discord.

At a regular meeting of the Church Trustees on February 2, 1890, the following resolution was adopted:

> Whereas the Armenian people, by reason of persecution and abject poverty, are immigrating to America in order to preserve these immigrants from being alienated, we hereby decide to build a church and we direct the Very Reverend Hovsēp' Sarajian to undertake the necessary negotiations for that purpose.[1]

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[1] *Dedication of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Hall*, December 8, 1968 ; *Houshamadean Hisnameay Dōnagadarout'ean Sourp P'rgich' Egeghets'woy Ousdri* ("Jubilee Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Church of Our Saviour"), May, 1944, Worcester, Mass., p. 42 ; Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1913, p. 70 ; "Veradzěnount," ("Renaissance"), *Armenia*, May 23, 1906.

To achieve this purpose pledges and membership dues were collected. Delegates were even sent abroad to seek financial assistance from individuals and organizations. The Church Trustees also appealed to other Armenian communities in America to aid them in their endeavors. In their zeal for building a church, Armenians in Worcester were encouraged by a Catholicosal encyclical received on February 22, 1890, applauding their efforts to build a church. This trait, noted Catholicos Khrimian, was characteristic of Armenian colonies in dispersion.[1]

Two opposing points of view at this time accounted for much of the tension and confusion that was existent in these initial stages of planning. There were those who wished to build a new church edifice on a parcel of land, while another group favored purchasing a building and renovating it to fit Armenian church specifications.[2] After much deliberation, the decision was reached to purchase a 5200 square-foot lot at 61-65 Laurel Street in a section inhabited mostly by Armenians. The land was bought for the price of $1275.00 and a construction contract with Bigelow Architects was signed for $6270.00. The foundation for the church was laid on July 15, 1890, and its construction was completed in January, 1891. The overall cost was estimated at $9460.60.[1]

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[1] Khrimian Hayrig, "Arh Kaght'agan Hayazouns Hameriga," ("To the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, January 1, 1921, p. 28.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1913, p. 70.

The consecration day for the first Armenian Church in America was bitterly cold and windy January 18, 1891. It coincided with the celebration of Armenian Christmas Eve.[2] The new church was named the Armenian Church of Our Saviour. In time this church indeed became the saviour of Worcester Armenians by translating the vital principles of Christianity and ethnic values into the daily lives of the people. Reporters were sent to cover the story, some finding it hard to believe that a handful of Armenians could actually start a church of their own.

The consecration ceremony itself was most impressive as Father Sarajian appeared in the flowing robes of his order and, assisted by the deacons, led the service.[3] The church was filled to capacity with many Armenians from surrounding cities in attendance also. The dedication of this church marked an epoch in the history of Armenians in America. It was the first church devoted to the observance of the Christian faith by Armenian immigrants who had left their homeland to make a new home in the United States. One reporter from the Worcester Telegram described the following:

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[1] Ibid.

[2] The Armenian Church officially followed the Julian Calendar which is thirteen days behind the Gregorian Calendar. Thus, Armenian Christmas fell on the sixth of January.

[3] Hantisades Omn (pseud.), "Sourp P'rgich'Egeghets'i Oust'ěr," ("The Armenian Church of Our Saviour at Worcester"), Haik, February 1, 1891, p. 24.

> His [Father Sarajian's] sermon was mainly congratulatory of the progress his countrymen had made while in this country. The Church which they were dedicating, he said, was merely a beginning--others were sure to follow.[1]

This first consecration of an Armenian Church building marked a fitting beginning to a long journey which was to lead to the establishment of the Armenian Diocese in America.

5. Spiritual Leadership in Dispute: Resignation (1893)

The spiritual pastorate, begun in 1889 with such enthusiasm, ceased to exist in 1893 because of individual and factional misunderstandings and strife. In the years following 1893, the church in Worcester became the scene for incessant rows between feuding groups, each desiring to maintain control of the leadership of the Church and to shape the policies of the community.

Due to personality clashes and differences in opinion as to the church building, as well as due to a power struggle, T'op'hanēlian became an officious opponent of the pastor and his volcanic temper brought about a discord between the two. T'op'hanēlian rushed letters to Armenian Church headquarters in Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin belittling Father Sarajian and degrading the work he was doing in Worcester. He also penned articles in various Armenian periodicals, strongly speaking out against the efforts of Sarajian to found a Church.[1]

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[1] "Only One in This Country," Worcester Telegram, January 19, 1891.

The plans laid down for the organization and systemization of church work in Worcester met financial difficulties due to Father Sarajian's periodic absences on pastoral visitations to other cities. The criticism was directed at Father Sarajian, serving only to further discredit his image.

An incident occurring in 1892 worsened the situation and brought matters to a breaking point. On May 22, 1892, a library was opened adjacent to the Church. Father Sarajian emphasized to the Church Trustees and the people that no revolutionary books or periodicals were to be put on the shelves. Despite his warnings, there were those wo did not heed the pastor's words and ordered such books and materials anyway, intensifying the situation even more.

The opening ceremonies for the library were held on August 26, 1892. Father Sarajian did not attend and excused himself under the pretext of being away on a business trip. He was charged with being the cause of division among Church Trustees' members and was criticized for his partisan prejudice against those of Protestant persuasion. The bitterness and resentment continued for some time and erupted in a fight on March 27, 1893, between the supporters of the pastor and the supporters of the Hnch'ag Party. Local police had to intervene. Father Sarajian himself could hardly escape his share of the responsibility in the matter and public disgrace and condemnation became his lot. Reporters were quick to supply news of the event, although somewhat exaggerated. The occurrence served to belittle and humiliate the Armenians in the eyes of their neighbors.[1]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1913, p. 72 M. T'op'hanēlian, "T'ght'agts'out'iwn," *Pountc*, August 4, 1890.

Father Sarajian had already submitted his resignation to the Church Trustees on September 4, 1892. The Trustees had refused to accept it and resolved to invite an assistant pastor to assist Father Sarajian. The Patriarchate in Constantinople did not seriously consider the request from Worcester upon which a cynical telegram was forwarded to them on August 25, 1893 in the absence of the pastor. It read, "The Church is closed. The priest is not here. Do you wish to dispatch someone or not?"[2] This time the response was prompt and a new superior was sent to the United States.

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[1] "The Priest in the Fight," *Worcester Telegram*, March 27, 1893. See also,"Ousdri Hayots' Verchin Tēbk'ern," ("Recent Events among the Armenians of Worcester"), *Haik*, May 1, 1893, pp. 123-126, "Ousdri Hayots' Mēch.Medz Grhiv Mě," ("A Great Melee among the Armenians of Worcester"), *Haik*, April 1, 1893, pp. 92-95.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1913, p. 74.

Nothing reveals the extraordinary humanity of this pious man, Father Sarajian, more clearly than his humility and inner greatness. He was simple and affectionate, both in his religious life and in his personal life. His sermons were delivered in simple words but were never lacking in inspiration. His love for his fellow men emanated from the depths of his priestly soul. His fatherly concern for his entire flock could only be misinterpreted by those who viewed him through tinted partisan glasses. The spark he kindled was not easily extinguished, even by his departure from the United States. Despite these positive qualities, Sarajian fell victim to a period of intense chaos caused by fanatic nationalism wherein one's greatest merits were to be found almost solely in his ethnocentricism. To an enlightened churchman such as Sarajian, it was impossible to compromise Christian virtue with the doubtful ramifications of fanaticism.

Five years later Father Sarajian was destined to return to America--this time as a bishop to initiate the establishment of the Armenian Diocese.

C. The Second Superior: Father Maghak'ia Dērounian (1894-1897)

Father Dērounian's pastorate was characterized by turmoil both in the homeland and in the Armenian communities of the United States. The Great Massacres of 1894-1896 resulted in numerous Armenians flocking to America seeking refuge. The "Friends of Armenia" was organized to assist the Armenians in their cause and to ease their pain and anguish. The internal problems, quarrels, and controversies confronting Father Sarajian now faced Father Dērounian. During this period there also can be detected a shift of allegiance by the Church in Worcester from the Patriarchate of Constantinople to Ēchmiadzin. This era is generally regarded as a period of unsuccessful pastorate. Unfortunately information concerning it is limited.

1. Election and Arrival

From among three nominees for the pastorate of Worcester, Father Maghak'ia Dērounian was selected by the Religious Council of the Patriarchate to assume the pastoral mission in the United States. The Church Trustees of Worcester gave its approval to the election on October 22, 1893. This was verified by the Mixed Assembly of the Patriarchate on November 23, 1893, and Father Dērounian became the Second Superior of the Spiritual Pastorate of the United States.[1]

Father Dērounian was born in 1846 in Diarbekir, Turkey. He received his religious training in St. James Monastery in Jerusalem from 1866 to 1871, when he was ordained a celibate priest. Prior to his arrival in the

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, p. 75.

United States he held administrative posts in the Dioceses of Cyprus (1873-1874), Baghdad, Iraq (1874-1880), Malatea, Turkey (1883-1884), and Aleppo, Syria (1887-1889).[1]

A telegram dated February 27, 1894, informed the Worcester parish that Father Dērounian would arrive in New York in the near future. Upon his arrival in New York, Father Dērounian was welcomed by certain community leaders, among them Dr. A. Ayvazian, H. T'awshanjian, and H. Arshagouni. Father Sarajian undertook the responsibility of officially introducing Father Dērounian to the Church Trustees of Worcester on March 28, 1894.[2]

2. "Friends of Armenia"

The start of the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896 coincided with the arrival of Father Dērounian in Worcester. These massacres sent a wave of horror throughout Christendom. A committee of inquiry was designated by the signatories of the Berlin Conference. This Committee began its inquiry, but in spite of it, the massacres continued into 1896. In August of 1896 the Bank Ottoman in Galata, a section of Constantinople, was captured by Armenian revolutionaries, a desperate move to make the world aware of the plight of the Armenians. Meanwhile, Armenian blood continued to be shed in the streets of Constantinople.

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[1] After a three-year stay in America, Father Dērounian returned to Ēchmiadzin where he was elevated to the rank of Bishop and was designated as Primate of Persia from 1898-1901. From 1903-1908 he retired to St. James Monastery in Jerusalem. From 1909-1922 he served as preacher in various churches in Constantinople and also as a member of the Religious Council of the American Patriarchate. He died in 1922. Mgrdich' Aghawnouni, Miapank' ew Ayts'elouk' Hay Erousaghēmi ("The Congregation and Visitors of Armenian Jerusalem") (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1929), pp. 241-242.

[2] Ibid., p. 98. See also Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch, p. 8.

As news of the massacres reached the civilized world, a society called the "Friends of Armenia" was organized under the leadership of Julia Ward Howe, an advocate and champion of great causes of human liberty. The intent of the society was to disseminate information about Armenians by means of the American press.[1] Another sympathizer and true friend of the Armenians was Alice Stone Blackwell. She was in charge of the Press Committee which distributed leaflets regarding Armenian affairs.[2] As Armenian refugees increased in Massachusetts, Miss Blackwell worked diligently to aid them in finding employment and adjusting to their new life. The following remarks about Miss Blackwell by Annie C. Marshall bear out the impact of the work she did.

> She used all her powers of pen and voice in pleading for the martyred people. At last her name became so obnoxious to the Sultan of Turkey that he bracketed it with Mr. Gladstone's and ordered that these two names were never to be mentioned in a newspaper.[3]

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[1] "The Friends of Armenia," Armenia, I(October, 1904), 43.

[2] "Dasnameag," ("Tenth Anniversary"), The Gotchnag, March 26, 1904, pp. 1373-1374.

[3] Annie C. Marshall, "The Armenians in America," Armenia, III (April, 1907), 41-42.

The "Friends of Armenia" Society labored assiduously to induce America to intervene on behalf of the Armenians. Mass meetings were organized in major American cities and American lay and religious leaders expressed concern and disapproval of the Ottoman atrocities. However, America hesitated to act alone in the matter. At this time Father Dērounian was criticized by many for his absence from the mass meetings of protest against Turkey, because he felt these demonstrations might result in adverse retaliation against the Patriarchate in Istanbul. Some used this as an argument to prove his ineptitude for his pastoral office.[1]

3. The Transferral of the Spiritual Jurisdiction from Constantinople to Ēchmiadzin

As time passed the rift among the people over Dērounian's apparent indifference widened and the effect was detrimental to the life of the church in Worcester. The Church Trustees, on August 11, 1895, officially requested from the Patriarchate an assistant pastor. They favored Bishop Eznig Abahouni, known for his revolutionary sympathies. Response from the Patriarchate only instructed them to be patient a while longer.[2]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, pp. 98-102.

[2] Ibid., pp. 102-103; Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egheghets'aganout'iwnĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912 pp. 111.

A member of the Church Trustees, Minas Aroyian, undertook an overseas trip at this time in order to visit the Church headquarters in Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin and thereby brief them about the present situation of Armenians in America. He wished to seek their assistance in the effective supervision of the pastorate of America.[1] Sources divulge no further information concerning Aroyian's trip or the outcome of his conversations with officials at Church headquarters.

Father Dērounian resigned on September 17, 1896. The Church Trustees appealed to the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin for a new pastor, alleging that "the pastors from Turkey were pro-Turkish, whereas the bishops from Ēchmiadzin were nationalistic and linguistic."[2] It was because of this request that thereafter the Diocese of America came under the jurisdiction of the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin.[3]

The Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, was instrumental in the procedure of transferring the supervision of the Church of Worcester to Ēchmiadzin. In his monumental work, *Azkabadoum* ("History of the Nation"),

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1913, p. 103; Atamian, "Amerigahay Egheghets'in ou Egheghets'aganout'iwně," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, p. 11

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1913, p. 103.

[3] *Ibid.*

Archbishop Ōrmanian characterizes the atmosphere of the times and relates the problems of his administration under Sultan Hamid.[1] New problems and concerns were created for the Church by the vastly increasing number of immigrants who took refuge in Europe and America after the massacres of 1894-1896. These refugees were mainly residents of Turkish Armenia and consequently their spiritual needs were administered to by the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople. With the influx of immigrants into European and American Armenian colonies, political leaders carried on their anti-Ottoman propaganda from these headquarters. Sultan Hamid tried to convince Patriarch Ōrmanian to use the powers of his office to quell the activities of these revolutionaries, or, at least, to minimize their influence among the people. The Patriarch wished to exclude himself from such political involvement and responsibility. Thus he replied to the Sultan that the mere fact of being Patriarch of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire did not accord him authority over Armenians living outside the Empire. Meanwhile, he had already informed the Catholicos Mgrdich' I Khrimian in Ēchmiadzin that due to the Sultan's policies it was difficult for him to minister properly to the needs of Armenians in Europe and America. Thus Patriarch Ōrmanian invited his superior in Ēchmiadzin to take actual charge of the new parishes of Europe and America. Political wisdom dictated a clear cut course of action.

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[1] Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, Azkabadoum ("History of the Nation") Vol. III, Book 3 (Beirut, Lebanon: Sevan Press, 1961), Cols. 5102-5105.

Catholicos Khrimian responded positively to Patriarch Ōrmanian's suggestion and elevated the spiritual pastorates of Europe and America to the level of a Diocesan establishment, claiming the right of spiritual jurisdiction over them.[1]

4. Unsuccessful Pastorate

Ēchmiadzin was notified of the resignation of Father Dērounian. The Church Trustees requested that the Catholicos dispatch Bishop Khorēn Sdep'anē as spiritual superior to the United States. A telegram was cabled to Catholicos Khrimian reading, "Yeagahazen Pagvaza Badaskhanin." ("The Church is closed. Reply.")[2] However, no reply was received from Ēchmiadzin; therefore the Trustees requested that Father Dērounian remain another two months, not in the capacity of a "superior primate," but as a Locum-Tenens. The Council also informed Father Dērounian, "We have received your resignation and hereafter you are relieved from your pastoral office, after a period of two months."[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn," ("Minutes of the Meetings: 1897-1901 of the Church Trustees of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour"), Worcester, Massachusetts, February 7, 1897, p. 3.

[3] Ibid.

At a meeting of the Church Trustees on February 28, 1897, an angry and indignant mood prevailed among the members. There still had been no reply from Ēchmiadzin. Another cable was wired, reiterating the need for a bishop in Worcester. Acknowledgement finally came from the Catholicos, "I have designated Father Masht'ots' as superior. Forward the travel expenses."[1] Other communities were informed of the cablegram and it was requested that they too contribute toward the travel expenses of the new pastor.

As the pastorate of the second superior Father Dērounian reached its close, it became apparent that disputes and bitter quarrels had again brought about the failure of a pastor. The immigrant community lacked both wisdom and education to contend with the situation. Nevertheless, it was enthusiastic as it prepared to receive its third superior--one who was said to be intellectually learned and spiritually gifted.

D. The Third Superior: Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian (1897-1898)

The period of Father P'ap'azian's pastorate was one of intense rivalry between lay and clerical leaders. Even more disturbing was the incessant struggle fought among the clergy themselves. The difficulties in the administration of the church stemmed from the fact that the duties of lay and clerical personnel were ill-defined from the outset. Old-world politics and loyalties threatened the religious life of the communities, especially when the clergy themselves became involved in political disputes. This period witnessed the establishment of political influence in ecclesiastical matters and the beginning of ambitious schemes by Armenian political parties to control the churches in the years to come.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," February 28, 1897, Worcester, Mass. p. 5; Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1913, p. 104.

Father P'ap'azian was born in Van, Turkey (no date available). His father, Mesrob, served as priest of the local church. His brother Vrt'anēs was a well-known writer and another brother Vahan, a prominent Tashnag leader. Father P'ap'azian studied at the Seminary of Armash in Turkey from which he graduated in 1896 and was ordained a priest by Archbishop Ōrmanian. Prior to his arrival in America in 1897 he served as Locum-Tenens of Bulgaria.[1]

The pastorate of Father P'ap'azian in America proved to be turbulent. His political sympathies for the Tashnag Party made him unpopular with the non-Tashnag Armenians. In 1906 he resigned from the priesthood. Two years later he left for Constantinople where he became editor of a Tashnag newspaper, Azadamard. During the massacre of 1915 he shared the fate of other intellectuals, and became a victim of the killings.

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[1] Ōrmanian, Khohk' ew Khosk', p. 445.

1. Beginning Amidst Obstacles

During a Church Trustees meeting on June 2, 1897, Father Maghak'ia Dērounian was officially replaced by Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian.[1] Upon the insistence of Father P'ap'azian it was agreed that Father Dērounian would stay in Worcester for another month in order to assist him in orienting himself with his new responsibilities.

It was at this time that several celibate and lay-priests (married priests)[2] arrived from Constantinople. Among them were Frs. Vahram Msrlian, Sdep'an Sdep'anian, Khat Markarian, Vaghinag Sisagian, and Aharon Melk'onian. During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, June 13, 1897, Father P'ap'azian read the pontifical encyclical of Catholicos Khrimian, designating him "General Pastor." Father P'ap'azian expressed his wish to write a letter of gratitude to the Catholicos on behalf of the community of Worcester. However, the members of the Church Trustees did not share the pastor's desire. Their argument was based on the notion that the Catholicos had ignored their continuous pleas to send them a bishop. They felt that the presence of a high ranking clergyman would have enhanced a bond of unity among the Armenian communities scattered throughout the

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," June 2, 1897, Worcester, Mass., p. 15.

[2] Lay priests: married clergy who are not elevated in the hierarchaī structure of the church but whose services are limited to parish ministry.

United States. The Church Trustees protested that the independent pastorate of Father Vaghinag Sisagian in Providence, Rhode Island, granted by the Catholicos Khrimian, might set a precedent for other independent communities in America and impair the idea of a central authority in Worcester. It was suggested that the pastor write a letter of gratitude to the Catholicos, also illustrating their anxieties over the situation and needs of the community.[1] P'ap'azian was requested to communicate with various communities in the United States and strengthen the ties between them. The pastor announced his wish to convene a national assembly with the participation of representative delegates for the preparation of jurisdictional by-laws to be presented to His Holiness for ratification.

It was agreed that the pastor would make pastoral visits, notifying them of his intent by pastoral letter.[2] As credentials, he carried with him the Encyclical of the Catholicos which he read to the faithful. A portion of it loosely defined the nature and extent of the jurisdiction of the superior, a matter which later proved fatal to his pastorate.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," June 13, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 20-21.

[2] Ibid., p. 21.

2. Rapprochement with the Armenian Protestants

In a report to the Church Trustees by Father P'ap'azian, he commented upon his visits to the Armenians in Brighton, Boston, Chelsea, and Malden. He stated his views concerning religious and social issues on a relatively liberal plain and the people responded positively in the election of trustees for local parishes and in the fund-raising campaign for the Worcester Church.[1] However, at a meeting held July 1, 1897, in Worcester, the Church Trustees voiced their disapproval of his liberal and presumptuous approach to the Armenian Protestants. They were of the opinion that the Protestants should not be allowed to participate in the affairs of the Armenian Church nor should they be elected to any office of the church, especially that of the Church Trustees as had been the case in Malden.[2]

In defense of his position Father P'ap'azian offered the following reasons.

> (1) The question of the relationship with the Protestants should be determined by the liberal spirit of the Armenian Church. It is purely a canonical matter and out of the sphere of Church Trustees' responsibility.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," June 24, 1897, Worcester, Mass., p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 28-29; Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1913, p. 106.

(2) Violent intolerance in Worcester is illustrated by the bitter quarrels, misunderstandings, and prejudices exercised by both sides. These separatist sentiments, inherited from the Middle Ages, and the religious controversies must recede if everyone is to take part in Armenian national affairs as brothers. P'ap'azian further observed that this kind of peaceful coexistence was not possible and that only Armenians of orthodox persuasion could participate in the election of the Church Trustees.

(3) In regard to the communities where there were no church organizations in existence, Armenians gathered without regard to any denominational difference and prayed, sang, and preached only as Armenians. This system of tolerance, he explained, is necessary for minorities in a land known as the "melting pot." In reference to Malden, P'ap'azian elucidated that the majority of Armenians there were of Protestant persuasion, but in spite of this, had accepted his invitation to come to a meeting. They agreed to organize their own community life under the supervision of the Armenian Church in Worcester and conduct religious services every Sunday, singing hymns and reciting prayers of the Armenian Church. He concluded by adding that the mere fact that three members of the Trustees were born Protestant did not make them guilty. Rather, these men were willing to abide by the rules of the Armenian Church.[1]

On September 25, 1897, an extraordinary assembly took place in Worcester concerning protests voiced against P'ap'azian by Boston Armenians. According to the information, Father P'ap'azian had allegedly approved the election of nine Protestant trustees in Boston, from a total of twelve. The assembly directed the chairman of the Church Trustees to go to Boston and investigate the matter.[1] The Trustees vociferously condemned the activities of Father P'ap'azian, who, from the start, pursued a "strange and heretical" policy which was detrimental to the best interests of the Armenian Church. The Church Trustees further accused the pastor of attempting to force upon them the presence of Protestant ministers at their regular meetings. When the pastor's requests were turned down by the Trustees, Father P'ap'azian roused the people against them. The Church Trustees felt the time had come to present their case to the public and to put an end to the comedy which was just another ramification of the theatrical genius of Father P'ap'azian, as they termed it.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," July 1, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 28-29.

Mik'aēl T'op'hanēlian was delegated by the Church Trustees to travel to Boston and to gather information concerning this problem. He reported that the allegations concerning the matter were all true. Thirty-five Armenians, both Orthodox and Protestant, participated in the elections. Nine out of twelve elected members were indeed Protestants, and out of the remaining three, the religious loyalty of one, G. Selian, was uncertain. The majority of the elected were avowed anti-orthodox, a fact well-known to Father P'ap'azian while in Boston. T'op'hanēlian also reported that P'ap'azian had conducted negotiations with Protestant missionaries and had reached an agreement with them, pending approval of the

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[1] Ibid., September 25, 1897, p. 59.

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He did not see the actual document, but according to reliable sources the Board would assign seven Protestant ministers to work among the Armenians. During Protestant services, the people would be permitted to sing Armenian Church chants and in orthodox Armenian Divine Liturgy services, Armenian Protestant hymns could be sung. According to this negotiated document, whenever and wherever an Armenian clergyman conducted a church service, he was to be accompanied by a Protestant minister who would deliver the sermon. Also, no Armenian clergyman would be allowed to visit a parish unless he first notified one of the seven ministers.

Thus T'op'hanelian concluded,

> We must always be on guard for no one really knows what the next move of this priest will be. If we reject his suggestions, we will be at discord with him. If we accept his innovative doctrines, the people and the Church will be imperiled. Father Masht'ots' is using his staff to crush the Armenian Church with one blow, thereby introducing new and strange heresies into our fold which have no other design but to create chaos in our beloved Church.[1]

Bishop Moushegh Seropian, a classmate of P'ap'azian, considered this report by T'op'hanēlian to be grossly exaggerated. He deemed that the situation arose because of the immaturity of Father P'ap'azian and his overzealous ambitions in serving his people.[1]

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[1] Ibid., October 14, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 64-65.

This incident served to deepen the rift between the pastor and the Church Trustees. Evidently there was a clash of personalities, more so than a quarrel within the community itself. Often it is difficult to protect the rights and interests of communities from the unscrupulous egotism of their leaders which engulfs them and draws then into disunion. If T'op'anēlian became the target for public contempt because of his long record of conspiracy, the spiritual leadership of Father P'ap'azian was threatened because of his impractical and hasty decisions and actions. It marked the beginning of a pastor's end.

3. The Rift Between Pastor and Church Trustees

A secret feud mounted between the pastor and the Church Trustees, awaiting only the opportune time to erupt and incite hate, rage, and ridicule. The chairman of the Church Trustees, T'op'hanēlian, assailed his opponents with bitter invective. On the other hand the personal vindictiveness of the pastor drove away many whose support he might otherwise have won by conciliation. The alienation of the members responsible for the church hall further enflamed the situation which became uncontrollable as time went on. The Trustees appointed a committee of twelve opponents to the priest for the maintenance of the church hall. The pastor, as president, wished that his objections to the appointment be recorded. The raging chairman addressed the recording secretary that the president had no right to speak during the meeting.[1] The only role he was to play was that of a mediator. A heated argument ensued, resulting in more discussion as to whether Father Masht'ots' was the General Superior of America or simply the pastor of the Worcester Church. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ē̆ ew ir Dzakoumnerē̆," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ē̆*, 1913, p. 106.

The issue was continued on August 31, 1897. The chairman stated that he considered the pastor an official of the church and president of the Church Trustees, not a member entitled to voice his opinions or cast a vote. He added that the pastor be accorded all due respect and honor by allowing him to occupy a chair, but that he simply act as a mediator and vote only in case of a tie. The pastor rebutted, declaring that no resolution could be settled without his confirmation and that the Church Trustees could not pass a decision without first consulting him.[2]

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," August 26, 1897, Worcester, Mass., p. 54; Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1913, p. 107.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn," August 31, 1897, Worcester, Mass., p. 55.

The pastor excused himself from attending a meeting held on September 2, 1897, and instead submitted a letter to the Trustees requesting a final decision and settlement of the issues which were discussed at the previous meetings. The consensus of the Trustees was that before a resolution was passed, the pastor should be consulted and be given the opportunity to voice his views. Although this matter was believed to have been ended, the opposite proved true. At another meeting two weeks later, it was learned that the pastor had forwarded a letter to the chairman in which he declared that thereafter he considered himself relieved of the duty of presiding over meetings. He also wrote that he no longer was obligated to work with the Church Trustees but preferred to work independently. The Trustees notified the Catholicos of the latest events confronting the church and community. Two trustees, Hagop Kazanjian and Minas Aroyian, were delegated to meet privately with P'ap'azian and to ease the tensions between him and the Church Trustees.[1] On October 14, 1897, the two delegates reported the failure of their mission. In order to terminate the unfortunate events, the Church Trustees resolved to resign corporately, leaving the burden of responsibilities upon the pastor.

The Trustees notified the Catholicos and the Armenian newspapers, both here and abroad. The pastor was denounced for his selfish ambitions and pretensions in regarding himself as the General Superior of America rather than the pastor of Worcester as delinated in the Encyclical of the Catholicos.[1]

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[1] Ibid., September 23, 24, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 59-60.

Meanwhile the pastor pursued another course. He took the case directly to the public as a counteraction to the accusations and moral implications made by the Church Trustees, who, he felt, were solely responsible for all the discord and animosity in Worcester. At a Membership Meeting convened on October 10, 1897, the allegations of the Church Trustees were rejected. The Membership Meeting elected an Investigating Committee to peruse both sides of the issue and to report its findings to the assembly.

In the period between October 11 and October 29, the Investigating Committee examined the situation, consulted with the respective parties, and submitted its findings to the Membership Meeting. Before the tribunal, Father P'ap'azian appeared as the plaintiff and the Church Trustees as the defendant. The Committee reported its findings as a result of three different sessions. At the first session on October 11, they requested the minutes of the meetings from the pastor and the Church Trustees. The Trustees refused to submit the minutes. On October 14, the second session, a letter from the secretary of the Church Trustees informed the Committee that no records would be sent. If they wished further explanations they must appear at a meeting of the Church Trustees. At the final session on October 14, the Investigating Committee listened to the complaints of the pastor. The Church Trustees did not participate. The conclusions of the Committee were as follows:

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[1] Ibid., October 14, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 62-63; Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1913, p. 107.

> (1) That both the pastor and the Church Trustees were guilty because they concealed their breach from the public, which had occurred on September 10.
>
> (2) That the Church Trustees unlawfully had attempted to dominate the pastor and his duties as Superior General. The chairman had resorted to every means to create scandals within the community. Thus the Church Trustees were responsible for being anti-constitutional and for being accomplices of the chairman. The discriminatory references made by Krikor Boyajian and Khach'adour Harout'iwnian were of an unrepeatable nature.
>
> (3) That the pastor was oversensitive in submitting his resignation.
>
> (4) That the Church Trustees never cooperated with the Investigating Committee but rather created many obstacles. The pastor was most cooperative and behaved courteously, honorably, and gracefully. The Committee dismissed Mik'aēl T'op'hanēlian and Krikor Boyajian from Armenian affairs and ostracized them as men of unworthy, notorious, and questionable character.[1]

The Membership Meeting forthwith dissolved the Church Trustees.

This was the situation when the newly elected Church Trustees received the Encyclical from the Catholicos concerning these latest affairs based upon reports submitted by the Investigating Committee to Holy Ēchmiadzin on August 10, 1897. The Encyclical was read in church and was also published in Armenian newspapers. It referred to Father P'ap'azian as "spiritual pastor of the Armenians of Worcester and its surroundings."[1] In order to prevent a reoccurrence of misunderstandings between the pastor and future Church Trustees regarding the spiritual jurisdiction of the pastor, the Encyclical clearly stated:

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," October 22, 29, 1897, Worcester, Mass., pp. 79-81.

> It is your duty and calling to serve as the pastor of the town of Worcester and its surroundings outside the jurisdiction of Father Vaghinag. You shall have as your permanent residence the town of Worcester, where the Church of Our Saviour is located. You are free and duty-bound to periodically visit those areas outside the jurisdiction of the rest of the clergy as the need arises, in particular to administer sacraments.[2]

This Encyclical had little or no effect.

In spite of all efforts to end the deplorable situation in the church, matters remained relatively unchanged. One meeting followed another, but to no avail. Men of goodwill and impartial standpoint were asked to mediate. The newly elected Church Trustees and pastor were still divided over the matter of his pastoral jurisdiction, and no remedy seemed to be forthcoming. At a December 15, 1897, meeting,

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[1] Ibid., December 12, 1897, p. 123; Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1913, p. 117.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1913, p. 118. Vaghinag refers to Fr. Vaghnag Sisagian, pastor of Providence area.

Baghdasar T'ashjian, an anti-pastor member of the Trustees, thundered at the pastor most threateningly, accusing him of disruptive and meddlesome activities. Baghdasar T'ashjian, accompanied by Hagop Kazanjian and Minas Aroyian, then announced their resignations from the Trustees and left the meeting. Once again the Trustee members experienced a deadlock. Hopes for reconciliation had disappeared and affairs of the Church were in a degenerating state. Difficulties obstructing the road to mutual understanding were many.

On May 15, 1898, the pastor spoke pessimistically and hopelessly of the prolonged divisiveness in the Church and reemphasized the need for putting trust in God to end the polemics. However, the solution lay far beyond the development of more understanding between pastor and Trustees.

A decade had passed since the building of the first immigrant church. New responsibilities and demands confronted the Church. A new and larger establishment was needed for a more secure and fruitful life for the religious community. This was the eventual evolution of the Church into a Diocesan establishment. One must not underestimate the conflicts and problems of the Worcester Church nor the hostilities and animosities which blocked the dialogue between the pastor and the community, forcing Father P'ap'azian to be whisked away, never to return.

4. The Finale

As a last resort Father P'ap'azian suggested asking Father Vaghinag Sisagian of Providence to intervene and attempt to end the turmoil. On June 2, 1898, Father Sisagian reported that he had contacted several dissatisfied persons in Worcester, among them former members of the Church Trustees, who voiced the following complaints and criticism against the pastor:

(1) The pastor is a close friend of the Armenian Protestants.

(2) The pastor overburdens the treasury with new and unnecessary expenses.

(3) The pastor often leaves the Church closed because of his visitations to different cities.

(4) Most of the pastor's sermons have nationalistic themes and are rarely of a religious nature. Therefore the people attend Protestant churches to hear sermons of a religious context.[1]

The Church Trustees requested that Father Sisagian continue his negotiations with the opposition. A meeting was held on June 3, 1898, at a local restaurant. Fourteen individuals were present, but the arch-rival of the pastor, T'op'hanēlian, was not invited. The unanimous assertion of the opposition was that in order to secure a permanent peace among the people, the resignation of the pastor, Father P'ap'azian, was necessary.[2] The next day a local Armenian newspaper, Euphrates, printed an article directed against the Church and Father P'ap'azian. It was the contention of Father Sisagian that the opposition was determined to continue the feud long after the pastor's departure. Therefore he enlightened the Trustees as to the nature of the results of his talks.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," June 2, 1898, Worcester, Mass., p.147.

[2] *Ibid.*, June 6, 1898, p. 148.

On June 6, 1898, Father P'ap'azian announced that he had no intention of leaving his post unless he became convinced that his resignation would result in peace, and until such time as a new pastor was elected to replace him. He further suggested that the resolutions of the October 17, 1897 meeting be nullified. These were the decisions that forbade several members from participating in church and community affairs. The Church Trustees consented but remained emphatic on the point that the former chairman, T'op'hanēlian, be cast out from the Armenian community as a demagogue, anarchist, traitor, and impostor. The following post-script by Father P'ap'azian appears at the end of the minutes of the meeting for June 6, 1898:

> As an Armenian clergyman, I forgive those who have trespassed against me abiding with the decisions of the honorable Parish Council and my confirmation of the proceedings of today's session.[1]

A telegram from Ēchmiadzin, dated June 24, 1898, prompted an urgent meeting to be convened on June 26. The cable, addressed to the chairman of the New York Trustees, H. S. T'awshanjian, was forwarded to Worcester and read as follows:

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[1] Ibid., June 6, 1897, Worcester, Mass., p. 149.

> The Armenians of New York and Worcester have repeatedly requested a bishop for the United States. We have decided to confer the order of bishop upon Sarajian. Therefore your final and official decision is necessary as to whether Sarajian is acceptable to your two communities. If so, cable us and forward his travel expenses.[1]

Upon Father P'ap'azian's suggestion, it was decided that the consent of Father Sisagian and the community of Providence be obtained due to the import of the matter. Of the one hundred people in attendance at the meeting, the majority favored the passage of a resolution on the issue. Those who were absent would be polled for their opinion. However, those at the meeting were unsuccessful in reaching a decision because one segment insisted that it was unconstitutional to have only the Armenians of Worcester vote upon the election of a primate for the entire United States. They demanded that an election of such magnitude must take place on a national scale by a convention representative of major cities throughout the nation.

Another faction was of the opinion that they were merely expected to answer the telegram and it was not their choice to question the validity of the law nor to contest the will of the Catholicos. No decision was reached but it was agreed to reconvene that evening. At ten minutes after seven, only forty-two people out of the five-hundred members of the church appeared for the meeting. By overwhelming approval the meeting reaffirmed the need for a bishop in the person of the Most Reverend Hovsēp' Sarajian. The meeting was then adjourned.[1] Father P'ap'azian and Father Sisagian jointly wired Ēchmiadzin, "We plead with you to await our letters concerning the General Bishop Superior."[2]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1913, p. 123; "Artsanakrout'iwn," June 26, 1897, p. 152.

On July 17, 1898, Father P'ap'azian addressed the Membership Meeting reflecting upon personal experiences he had encountered during his pastorate, especially those material, intellectual, and moral losses he had undergone. He revealed that on June 19, 1898, he had submitted his resignation to the Catholicos. It was now up to them, the people of Worcester, to determine whether they wished him to remain until the arrival of the new pastor. If they desired him to remain, certain requirements had to be met. These included a salary of forty dollars, relief from administrative duties and involvement only in ecclesiastical matters, and finally one day a week for visitations, house calls, and other religious duties. If these were not suitable to them, then there was but one choice for him--to depart from Worcester immediately, leaving the care of the church to the

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," June 26, 1897, Worcester,Mass.,p.153.

[2] Ibid.

Trustees and people, and his own future to destiny. The Church Trustees were notified of Father P'ap'azian's resignation in a letter of August 9, 1898. The Trustees unanimously consented to accept the resignation, deeming his departure from Worcester most beneficial at that time.[1]

The church was left in a total state of chaos. The community was without moral and spiritual guidance. Uncertainty loomed over the immigrant community. Antagonism, conflict, ignorance, and hatred were at work among the people. Matters were at such a low ebb that for the minimum maintenance of the church, the community of nearly a thousand had to turn to the *jamagoch*, the custodian, in order to borrow the sum of fifty dollars.[2]

Hope was not completely vanished. The immigrants learned from a Marseilles-based weekly, *Armenia*, that Hovsēp' Sarajian, who had once come to America as a priest, was now returning as a bishop to lay the foundation of a Diocesan establishment. He appeared to be the only solace for the bereaved and scattered immigrant colonies and the panacea to their wounds. In a remarkable reversal the minutes of the Church Trustees meeting observe that "our gratitude is boundless toward our God-ordained Catholicos Hayrig (Father), who has heeded our pleas and has granted us our own leader."[3]

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," August 8, 1898, Worcester, Mass., p. 169.

[2] *Ibid.*, September 18, 1898, Worcester, Mass., p. 180.

[3] *Ibid.*

This reversal was probably motivated by a deep sense of reverence toward the Catholicos as well as the inter-community jurisdictional questions. The apparent insight of the Pontiff at Ēchmiadzin concerning the acute problems existing in an Armenian-American community is noteworthy.

E. The Armenian Church in Providence: The Beginnings (1897-1899)

The beginnings of the Armenian community in Providence, Rhode Island, date back to the late 1870s. Several Armenian immigrants came to settle in this industrial city where they found employment in jewelry, textile, machine and tool manufacturing firms. By the late 1890s some five hundred Armenians had settled in Providence and surrounding towns.[1] The pioneers of the community were Melk'on Markarian, Asadour Mavian, and Mesrob Ēvarian. Among these early settlers was one known as Dikran Khohararian, a native of Diarbekir, Turkey, who settled in Providence in 1885. His familiarity with the English language enabled him to secure jobs for other immigrants in manufacturing firms. With the growth of immigration to Providence in the 1890s, Armenian religious, charitable, cultural, and political organizations flourished.[1]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, p. 35; *Ardsateay Hopelean Srpots' Tarkmanch'ats' Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy P'rawidensi* ("Silver Jubilee Saint Sahag-Mesrob Church of Providence"), Providence, Rhode Island, 1913-1939, p. 4; "Artsanadedr Sourp T'arkmanch'ats' Egeghets'woy Hokapartsout'ean," ("Records of the Trustees of the Holy Translators Church"), Providence, Rhode Island, June, 1897-April, 1903.

The beginnings of Armenian religious life are connected with the name of Father Sarajian, the first spiritual pastor of Armenians in America. He occasionally visited the Armenians in Providence and provided spiritual nourishment as early as September, 1889.[2] Church services were held in rented halls. As the community grew, the need for a permanent pastor became imperative. Consequently, the people appealed to the Pontiff at Ēchmiadzin and the Patriarch of Constantinople. The first parochial organization of Armenians in Providence was associated with the name of Father Vaghinag Sisagian of Constantinople. His pastorate began on May 30, 1897, and ended with his death from a brain hemorrhage on July 14, 1899, at forty years of age.[3]

Father Sisagian was born in Nor Kiwgh, a suburb of Brussa, Turkey, with the name Eghia.[4] He attended the Armenian seminaries in Sis, Turkey, and Jerusalem. In 1882 he was ordained by Bishop Ghewont Shishmanian, Primate of Giwrin, Turkey.[1] On May 15, 1896, Father Sisagian was assigned as preacher of Saint Keōrk Church in Samatia, a suburb of Constantinople.[2] During his tenure in Samatia he won popularity as a dynamic preacher. He was also actively involved in underground activities of the Armenian revolutionaries.[3] To escape the Hamidean Massacre of Constantinople in August, 1896, Father Sisagian was forced to seek refuge in Bulgaria.[4] During his stay in Rumania, he received an invitation from the Church Trustees of Providence to serve as their pastor. The invitation was confirmed by Catholicos Mgrdich' Khrimian.

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1912, pp. 36-52.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 36 M. T'op'hanēlian, "T'ght'agts'out'iwn," *Pountc*, September 30, 1889.

[3] "Mahakoyj Dēr Vaghinag Dsayrakoyn Vartabed Sisagiani," ("Obituary of Very Reverend Father Vaghinag Sisagian"), *Hairenik*, July 22, 1899.

[4] Biographical data on Father Sisagian is fragmentary. The date of his birth is cited as 1851 in Izmit, Turkey, in *Ardsateay Hopelean*, p. 22.

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[1] Aghawnouni, Miapank' ew Ayts'elouk' Hay Erousaghēmi, p. 232.

[2] Letter from Father Vaghinag Sisagian to Very Reverend Father Kapriēl Jēvahirjian, Locum-Tenens of Constantinople, January 8, 1898. Quoted in "Tghtagts'out'iwnner ou Badjēnner Vaghinag Vartabed Sisagiani Goghmen," ("Collection of Letters of Father Vaghinag Sisagian"), September 1897-1899, Providence, p. 82.

[3] "Mahakoyj Dēr Vaghinag Dsayrakoyn Vartabed Sisagiani," Hairenik, July 22, 1899. According to this article, Father Sisagian supported Tashnag ideology rather than that of other Armenian political organizations. This however, must be approached with caution for non-Tashnag sources nowhere criticize Father Sisagian for his political leanings.

[4] The Sultan was enraged because of the capture of the Bank Ottoman in Constantinople by twenty-six Tashnag youth on August 26, 1896. The reason for the capture was to call the attention of European powers to the plight of the Armenians.

Father Sisagian arrived in Providence on May 30, 1897. His pastorate coincided with the period of the third spiritual pastorate of America, when Father Dērounian was replaced by Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian, a colleague of Father Sisagian.

Father Sisagian offered his first Mass on June 6, 1897, in Diamond Hall. His first task as pastor of Providence was the formation of a new twelve-member Board of Church Trustees on June 13, 1897.[1] Those elected were Awedis Dērōyian, Bōghos Alajian, Bōghos Eaghjian, Setrag Soghigian, Khach'adour Sahagian, Kalousd Bōrch'agian, Zakar Sarkisian, Tovmas Jēlalian, Kasbar Parechanian, Garabed Paraghamian, Setrag Samourian, and Moushegh Maksoudian. Kalousd Bōrch'agian was elected chairman. On June 18, the outgoing Church Trustees transferred church records and contents of the treasury, an amount of $12.78, to the new Trustees.[2]

As Armenian activities increased the people of Providence felt the necessity for a community center to accommodate their needs. Consequently the Church Trustees rented a hall on

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[1] "Artsanadedr," June, 1897-April, 1903, Providence, p. 1. No mention is made of the use of a church constitution or by-laws for the election proceedings. It is simply stated that the election took place "according to the rules." Awedis Dērōyian received the highest number of votes. It had been upon his instructions that the Trustees had made their choice of Father Sisagian.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Exchange Place in Providence.[1] However, they encountered numerous financial difficulties and had to appeal to the surrounding communities of Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Central Falls, Fall River, and even Hartford and New Britain, Connecticut for assistance.[2] The Church Trustees decided that Father Sisagian would celebrate Divine Liturgy every other Sunday morning and that the hall would be used in the evenings for lectures. On the other two Sundays of the months, Father Sisagian was to visit the surrounding towns which fell under the jurisdiction of the Providence parish.[3]

The appointment of Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian to the Armenian Church in Worcester in March, 1897, by Catholicos Khrimian created a source of friction between him and Father Sisagian over jurisdictional matters.[4] The Catholicos had not designated any clear-cut lines of authority, and consequently Father P'ap'azian regarded his appointment to be that of spiritual pastor of all Armenian communities in the United States, while Father Sisagian considered his pastorate independent of the jurisdiction of Father P'ap'azian.[1] To resolve their differences both clergymen appealed to Catholicos Khrimian to intervene. On September 25, 1897, the Catholicos notified Father P'ap'azian that his authority extended only to the parish of Worcester and its surrounding communities and that Father Sisagian held jurisdiction over those areas already assigned to him--that is Providence and its surrounding communities.

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[1] Ardsateay Hopelean, p. 6. The request of the Armenian Church Trustees to use the facilities of a local Episcopalian Church was not received favorably by the Church authorities of that Church.

[2] "Artsanadedr," June, 1897-April, 1903, Providence, pp. 5-8, 11.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 14. Armenian political organizations were allowed use of the center with no monetary obligations. A collection plate was usually circulated. A library was also housed in the building.

[4] Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, pp. 12-13.

A meeting on November 7 in Worcester attempted to bring about mutual understanding and settlement of differences on various aspects of the religious and administrative life of the church. It was attended by Fathers P'ap'azian, Sisagian, and Markarian. It was here determined to divide the American Diocese into four jurisdictional areas; Father P'ap'azian's authority extended over the state of Massachusetts; Father Sisagian's over Rhode Island; Father Markarian's over Chicago; and Father Melkonian's over Fresno. New York State was to be divided equally between Fathers Sisagian and P'ap'azian.[2] Although Fathers Sisagian and P'ap'azian reconciled their differences, P'ap'azian was unable to settle his problems with the Trustees of the Worcester Church. This finally led to his dismissal from that parish and vanquished all his aspirations for founding a spiritual pastorate of America. Father Sisagian made several attempts to arbitrate the differences but was unsuccessful.

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[1] Letter from Father Sisagian to Father Khat Markarian, Boston, Mass., October 25, 1897. Quoted in "Tghtagts'out'iwnner," pp. 56-57.

[2] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutë ew ir Dzakoumnerë," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ë, 1913, pp. 109-110, 121-122; Letter from Father Sisagian to Catholicos Khrimian, November 8, 1897. Quoted in "T'ght'agt's'out'iwnner," pp. 68-69.

The Church in Providence also assumed social obligations toward her flock although it was on a limited scale. The sick, poor, and needy were assisted by Father Sisagian and the Church Trustees. Financial support was extended to orphanages, refugees, hospitals, and schools in the homeland.

The religious life in the Armenian community in Providence was destined to be short-lived. Father Sisagian had been ailing for some time and on July 5, 1899 he was stricken with a heart seizure and hospitalized on July 9. He died on midnight July 14, 1899. Funeral services at the Evangelical Church in Providence were attended by Bishop Sarajian, Primate of the Armenian Church. Father Sisagian was laid to rest in North Burial Cemetery. It was not until 1937, however, that a humble tombstone was erected on his grave, mainly through the efforts of Father Zkōn Ch'arkhoujian.[1] The seed of the Church that Father Sisagian sowed was not realized until 1913 when Armenian immigrants were finally able to own their Church.[2]

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[1] "Artsanadedr," June, 1897-April, 1903, Providence, p. 92 ; Ardsateay Hopelean, p. 6.

[2] Ardsateay Hopelean, pp. 9-12.

F. Other Parishes

In the years preceding the establishment of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in the United States, the two communities of Worcester and Providence had organized themselves into church parishes. Each had its own place of worship and pastor and served as the prototype for other parishes throughout the United States. In addition to Worcester and Providence, other parishes were in the making. Although these had no church building of their own, their religious needs were ministered to by Armenian pastors who conducted services in local Protestant Episcopal Churches. These parishes were Boston, Massachusetts, and Manchester, New Hampshire, over which Father Khat Markarian was in charge; Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts, served by Father Sdep'an Dēr Sdep'anian; New York City and West Hoboken, New Jersey, ministered to by Father Vahram Msrlian; and Fresno, California, tendered by Father Aharon Melkonian. These pastors were assisted in their work by local Church Trustees.

Whenever requested, these clergymen also visited other Armenian communities which had no local Armenian Church or organized Church Trustees. They encouraged the local Armenians to organize themselves into ecclesiastical bodies and to secure their own permanent pastor.

The discussion of these parishes will be presented during the periods in which their church buildings were consecrated.

G. Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, the formative years of the Armenian Church in America were marked by considerable confusion, indecision, and experimentation until more definite forms of religious authority and structure emerged, which bore the influences of the new American milieu in addition to the traditional Armenian ethnic elements. What started as a cultural-patriotic club in Worcester, Massachusetts and New York City eventually became the nucleus of a church organization with parishes in the United States and Canada.

The arrival of Father Sarajian as the first pastor of the Armenian Church in 1889 and the subsequent formation of the Worcester parish were important events since they helped establish precedents which were to be emulated by other parishes in later years. The patterns of authority relationships and administrative procedures that were developed in this period were to serve as the bases for church life in subsequent decades despite their inherent weaknesses and inadequacies.

For example, due to their long years of stay in the United States, many Armenian immigrants had lost the sense of discipline and cooperation necessary for collective endeavors, especially in church life. Thus, in the incipient environment of heightened individualism and disorderliness, the traditional relationship of reverence between pastor-priest and communicant could not be fully maintained from the outset. Moreover, in the secular and relaxed circumstances of America, the traditional modes of deference were not viable.

A related precedent was the trend toward "trusteeism" which remains a feature of contemporary church life. Finally, there was the "over-democratization" of religious organizations, a characteristic peculiar to the American scene, which was included in church constitutions and bylaws. A major reason for "over-democratization" was the deep anti-clericalism of the party leaders who wanted to assure a degree of political influence in church affairs. Also, many civilian leaders became jealous of the wide popularity which priests usually evoked from their flock. This jealousy was particularly true of Armenian politicians who feared the power of the pulpit and aspired to use the pulpit for their own nationalist propaganda.

Under these unhappy circumstances Father Sarajian was forced to resign in 1893 as would his successor, Father Dērounian, three years later. Meanwhile, the Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896 were to complicate the conflict-ridden life of American Armenians. The appointment of a third Superior, Father P'ap'azian, further aggravated the situation because of his over-zealous attempts to seek a rapprochement with the Armenian Protestants and his absolute claim to his status. In mid-1898 Father P'ap'azian resigned amid great consternation; but the news that the Catholicos had appointed Father Sarajian as Primate with the rank of bishop brought new hope for a brighter future.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUNDATION OF THE DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

(1898-1906)

A decree issued on July 2, 1898, by Mgrdich'I Khrimian (endearingly referred to as Khrimian Hayrig, or Father), Catholicos of All Armenians, marked the inception of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in the United States.[1] It was patterned after the dioceses of the mother country and was under the direct ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Holy See in Ēchmiadzin, Armenia. Serious problems, such as immigration growth, clergy shortage, and political rivalry, confronted the church in those early years and, to a degree, have persisted to the present time.

From the outset it was the lot of the Armenian Church of America to be drawn into passionate "Old-world politics" and factionalism. However, a portion of the blame rested with the clergymen who contributed to the tragic state of affairs in the church. Since their inception, the Armenian political parties had endeavored to reduce the influence of the church upon the people. The Armenian Church had traditionally enjoyed an almost theocratic relationship with its people primarily because of frequent subjugation of the nation. The political parties, especially in the late 1890s, developed an anti-clerical attitude parallel to that of Europe. In their anxiety to separate the church from a significantly effective role in the community and restrict the church to a purely ritualistic role, these parties failed to recognize the dangerous ramifications of such a policy. First, the Armenians had no independent or autonomous governmental structure anywhere. Hence, political parties in the diaspora could play no legitimate role in their respective country of operation. Secondly, political parties could hardly be considered legally instituted representatives of the Armenian minorities in the diaspora. Hence the political parties at best could play but an artificial role in a cultural pocket in, and subject to, a disinterested foreign country. The church, however, was the one national institution that could justify its existence and represent its people in any country of the diaspora, Christian or non-Christian, without having to acknowledge a political structure in its people.

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[1] "Gontag Arh Masht'ots'" ("Encyclical to Masht'ots'") Armenia, January 15, 1898, p. 10.

The totally undisciplined and presumptuous role of the political parties in diaspora became rapidly rooted in the United States. In the absence of established ethnic traditions and institutions in America, the political parties were able to magnify their artificial role and entrench against the inevitable growth and establishment of the church in

America. This situation accounts for much of the conflict which characterized the American church scene.

For these reasons, the Armenian Church from the beginning suffered from a lack of well-defined goals and she found it hard to implement her policies toward institutionalisation.

A. Start of the Diocesan Organization: First Primate, Bishop Hovsēp' Sarajian

Bishop Sarajian arrived in New York on October 7, 1898, to assume his new duties. He spent the first two weeks in New York where he celebrated Divine Liturgy on October 16 in the Church of St. John Chrysostom, by permission of the Episcopalian trustees. During the Divine Liturgy or Badarak, Father Khat Markarian, one of the assisting priests, read the Hayrabedagan Gontag (Pontifical Encyclical) in which Catholicos Khrimian exhorted his children in the following words:

> I have examined him [Sarajian] and found him to be qualified and appropriate as pastoral leader of America, for which reason I have elevated him to the rank of bishop and titled him Primate of the Armenians in America. Therefore, you displaced Armenians in America, heed the call of your courageous leader, follow his leadership, discharge his beneficial biddings, and mark his counsel.[1]

Bishop Sarajian arrived in Worcester on October 23, 1898, and assumed his office as the first Armenian Primate of the Diocese of America. By establishing a Diocese in the United States, in place of the Spiritual Pastorate, the Holy See assured the possibility of a successful continuation of the immigrant church.

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[1] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn Arhachnortagan T'emin Hayots' Amerigayi, p. 21 ; "Gontag Arh Masht'ots'", Armenia, January 15, 1898, p. 10.

1. The Re-Organization of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour in Worcester

The Bishop was faced with numerous problems after assuming his office in Worcester. Among these were poor church attendance, religious apathy, secularism, shortage of pastors, and financial difficulties.

The first Membership Meeting of the Worcester parish was convened on October 1, 1899. It was attended by delegates from the surrounding towns of Worcester County and the Blackstone Valley, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Worcester parish. Primate Sarajian introduced a set of By-Laws consisting of seven headings and forty articles dealing primarily with administration and procedure.[1] The need for a new pastor to replace Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian was raised. It was decided not to appeal overseas for a pastor since Garabed Martougēsian, an Armenian Protestant preacher, had expressed desire to return to the fold of the Armenian Church. Consequently, Martougēsian was ordained into the diaconate on October 8 and into the sacred priesthood on October 15.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," Worcester, Mass., October 1, 1899, pp. 204-210.

This was the first priestly ordination of the Armenian Church in America.[1]

To make full use of the facilities of the Church, and as a source of income, it was decided to rent the Church hall to various Armenian organizations for their functions, on the conditions that lectures or gatherings must not impede the moral and religious welfare of the Armenian community.[2] It was also decided that no political organization be allowed to use the hall due to the bitter quarreling and fighting which characterized most of their meetings, a condition most embarrassing to the Armenian Church and community. Exceptions would be made only if the political organizations agreed to hold a function under the supervision of the committee. The Primate consented to this arrangement. This action prompted anti-Primate activities which eventually forced the Bishop to submit his resignation.

2. First Clergy Conference (1901)

The convocation of the first clergy conference, convened by the Primate, Bishop Hovsēp' Sarajian on June 4-5, 1901, promised to be an important event for the Diocese in its formative years. Of some twelve priests in America at the time, the ones who attended the conference were the Reverend Frs. Ghewont Martougēsian of Worcester, Sahag Nazarēt'ian of New York, Arsēn Vehouni of Lawrence, Masht'ots' P'ap'azian of Boston, and a sub-deacon P'arhnag Atamian, a student from the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge.[1]

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[1] Ibid., October 1, 1899, Worcester, Mass., p. 203; "Vartabedagan Udzoum," ("Ordination into the Priesthood"), Tzain Haireniatz, October 14, 1899.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn," October 1, 1899, Worcester, Mass., p. 211.

The first order of business was the reading of the Pontifical Encyclical issued on July 2, 1898, concerning the elevation of the Spiritual Pastorate of America to the status of a Diocese. The clergy were concerned with locating candidates for the priesthood for various communities. The priests drew up a preliminary draft of the Constitution of the Armenian Church in America, consisting of eighty-two articles.[2]

A major area of concern was the role of the clergy, the performance of their duty, and their assignment to parishes. Some clergymen had insufficient certification and others, who had been defrocked, were still traveling in various cities, causing administrative problems for the newly established Diocese.[1] To end this embarrassing and scandalous situation, Catholicos Khrimian issued an Encyclical on October 9, 1901, ordering the immediate retirement of those clerics who were not officially bound to the Diocese.[2]

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[1] Father Sahag Nazarēt'ian was a former member of the Brotherhood of the Mekhitarists in Venice, an Armenian Catholic Monastery. A lack of complete recorded proceedings of this Conference prevents knowledge of why some clerics attended and others did not. Most likely, geographical distance and lack of travel expenses were determining factors. Ashjian, _Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn Arhachnortagan T'emin Hayots' Amerigayi_, pp. 23-24 ; Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egheghets'aganout'iwnē, _Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ē_, 1912, p. 114.

[2] _Sahmanatrout'iwn Hokewor Garhavarout'ean Hayasdaneayts' Sourp Egeghets'woy Arhachnortagan Vijagin Amerigayi_ ("Constitution of the Spiritual Government of the Holy Armenian Church of the Diocese of America") (Venice: St. Lazzarre Press, 1903), p. 23.

For a number of years the shortage of qualified priests constituted the major area of concern for the Armenian Church in America. Often clerical prestige suffered, as well as the prestige of the church. As a result, the people almost entirely ignored the decrees of the church. However, there were men of great respect and dedication who supported the church in her early days of organization and brought her into prominence in America.

3. First Diocesan Convention (1902)

The first Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of America was convened by Bishop Sarajian in Worcester on June 12, 1902. The primary issue was the presentation of the draft of a Constitution for the Diocese based upon the preliminary

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[1] Some clergymen had come to America without obtaining permission and credentials from their Primates in the Dioceses of the homeland. Consequently, they were defrocked either by the Catholicos or their Primates who notified the Worcester Diocese of the matter.

[2] Hovsēp' Sarajian, "Bashdōnagan Azt" ("Official Notice"), Tzain Haireniatz, March 1, 1902.

Constitution drafted by the Clergy Conference of 1901.[1] The newly drafted Constitution consisted of ten headings and ninety articles, a condensed version of which appears below.

I. Organization (Articles 1-5)

The Diocese is an inseparable part of the Catholicate of All Armenians in Echmiadzin, headed by a Bishop as its Primate.

Those communities which have a parish church will have under their jurisdiction all neighboring communities with no church and will be called Hovouagan T'em (Parish). Those areas with no local Armenian Church, pastor, or church organizations in their immediate vicinity will be directly under the jurisdiction of the Diocese.

Each parish may have its local By-Laws adapted to its respective situation. These By-Laws are to be prepared by the local pastor and the Membership Meeting. Those areas with no local Armenian Church will have By-Laws set forth by the Diocese.

II. The Primate (Articles 6-13)

The Primate will serve as a link between the communicants of the Church and the Pontiff in Ěchmiadzin.

In the absence of a Primate, the Diocese is to be governed by a Locum-Tenens until the election of a Primate.

A Primate is elected from a slate of nominees prepared by the Central Executive Committee. In case of a deadlock, the Diocesan Convention will request from the Catholicos a new list of nominees or will request that he designate a Primate.

The headquarters of the Diocese will be located in Worcester; this location is subject to change.

The Primate shall oversee the proper execution of the doctrines, canons, and rituals of the Armenian Church

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[1] Sahmanatrout'iwn, 1903, p. 23. The preliminary Constitution drafted by the Clergy Conference in 1901 is not available.

The Primate shall pay annual visits to parishes.

The Primate is the chief executive and President of the Central Executive Committee and Diocesan Convention and overseer of parishes. He has no power to dismiss an official of the church nor to dissolve any church organization before consulting with the Central Executive Committee, Diocesan Convention, and Catholicos. He may temporarily suspend any official at his discretion. The final decision rests with the Diocesan Convention and the Catholicos.

Any complaint filed against the Primate must be submitted to the Central Executive Committee, pending decision of the Diocesan Convention.

III. Parish Pastors (Articles 14-24)

The parish priests are the ex-officio presidents of their parish administrations and organizations.

Their duties include preaching, administering sacraments, teaching the Armenian language, pastoral visitations, encouraging charitable organizations, maintaining church ledgers, and adhering to the Diocesan Constitution. The pastor must submit extraordinary issues to the Primate and should not operate outside his own jurisdiction.

Parish priests must submit their resignations to their parish Membership Meetings, who in turn submit the same to the Primate.

IV. Diocesan Convention (Articles 25-33)

The Diocesan Convention shall be composed of the priests and elected delegates from each parish and is the official representative body of the Armenian Church in America.

In the case of a complaint against the Primate at a Diocesan Convention, the ranking clergymen shall preside over the Convention.

The Diocesan Convention shall elect a Primate (for life). Diocesan delegates are elected every four years.

V. Central Executive Committee (Articles 34-49)

The Central Executive Committee is comprised of a Religious and Finance Committee.

The Religious Committee of the Central Executive Committee is comprised of four priests and the Primate and, under the presidency of the Primate, shall expedite all religious and spiritual matters.

The Finance Committee of the Central Executive Committee is elected every four years and shall have five members. The Finance Committee shall expedite all financial matters of the Diocese. The combined Central Executive Committee shall expedite all other matters.

The Chancellary of the Central Executive Committee shall be made up of the Chairman of the Religious Committee and the Secretary of the Finance Committee.

VI. Parish Membership Meetings (Articles 50-55)

The parish Membership Meeting shall elect a pastor, consider annual budgets, and expedite local matters.

VII. Church Trustees (Articles 56-67)

The election of Church Trustees is ratified by the pastor.

The Church Trustees shall meet periodically under the presidency of the pastor and expedite parish matters.

Where an insufficient population does not provide for Church Trustees, an official shall be appointed by the Primate to attend to the matters of that jurisdiction.

VIII. Finance (Articles 68-76) These articles deal with Church Income and Disbursements

IX. Election Rules (Articles 77-89)

X. Amendments (Article 90)

The Catholicos confirmed the Constitution on September 6, 1902, with an Encyclical. He ordered it to be put into immediate use for the administration of the parishes. The Encyclical made it clear that the Constitution was subject to change or amendments dependent upon growth and change in the parishes.[1] The right to make revisions was the prerogative of the Diocesan Convention by ratification of the Catholicos.

The parishes were asked to conform to the central authority of the Diocese. The Convention closed in apparent harmony, but this did not long endure. Both lay and church leaders ignored decisions of the Convention and political pressures were alternately applied by the political parties, although the Veragazmeal Hnchag Party appeared to be more persistent in church politics.

B. Polish Appeal to the Armenian Church

It was shortly before the Diocesan Convention was called that Bishop Sarajian found himself involved in an interesting ecumenical conversation. It was initiated by the Polish National Catholic Church in America.

The efforts to create Polish religious institutions by the Polish immigrants had met only resistance from the American Catholic hierarchy, consisting largely of clergymen of Irish and German background. At the turn of the century there were nearly two hundred Polish parishes in the United States. The demand for new parishes outstripped the Roman

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[1] Sahmanatrout'iwn, 1903, p. 5.

Catholic Church's willingness or ability to create them. There were no Polish bishops and the Poles said the Irish-German hierarchy had little concern for their welfare. They saw themselves relegated to second class membership with no rights, only obligations. They particularly resented orders to give up teaching the Polish language and culture in their parish school. Discontent blazed into open revolt and mass upheavals took place in numerous Polish communities, among them Chicago, Buffalo, and Cleveland, as well as smaller communities in New England and New Jersey.[1]

Father Francis Hodur, a Polish Catholic priest, was instrumental in organizing the first congregation of the new denomination in Scranton, Pennsylvania. According to a charter adopted by the Church, members were given the right to share in management along with the priests. Soon other congregations also took steps to divorce themselves from the mainstream of Roman Catholicism.

In April, 1902, two Polish priests requested an audience with Bishop Sarajian. They carried a personal letter from Father Hodur requesting that one of the priests be allowed to receive an episcopal ordination at the hands of Bishop Sarajian, in order to establish a canonical see for their new congregation. Bishop Sarajian replied that he could not accommodate their requests without official instructions from the Catholicos of All Armenians in Ēchmiadzin. However, Bishop Sarajian did promise to notify Ēchmiadzin at once about this request.[1]

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[1] Helen Buckley, "The Polish National Catholic Church of American Origin," Outlook, May, 1958, pp. 2-3.

At a conference on October 16, 1902, a resolution was passed that the new domination would recognize the Catholicos of All Armenians as their spiritual head rather than the Pope of Rome, whom they had ceased to recognize for the past six years. The resolution further revealed that Father Francis Hodur was to be elevated to the rank of bishop and that thereafter, any type of clerical ordination would be subject to the confirmation of the Armenian Catholicos. The resolution concluded on an optimistic note, trusting that their request would be considered most seriously and that their wish be granted accordingly.[2] It is unclear what happened subsequently.

However, by 1904 the first synod of the new Polish National Catholic Church was held in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Father Hodur was chosen bishop-elect and initiated a program of intense nationalization of the parishes.

C. Mission in the Name of God and Country

From a political point of view the period of Bishop Sarajian's primacy was one of crucial importance for the physical and spiritual survival of the Armenians, both at home and in America. Armenians on both sides of the Atlantic looked to each other for assistance. Once again the Church was called upon to furnish guidance.

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[1] "Armerigayi Lehats'ik' ew Sourp Ēchmiadzin" ("The Poles in America and Holy Ēchmiadzin"), Loumay, September-October, 1902, pp. 264-265; "Amerigayi Lehats'inerě" ("The Poles of America"), Loumay, November-December, 1902, pp. 295-298.

[2] "Amerigayi Lehatsinerě," Loumay, November-December, 1902, pp. 295-298.

Already the volatile relations of Turkey and America had taken a turn for the worse over the issue of naturalization concerning the Armenians. Turkey declared that Ottoman subjects obtaining foreign naturalization without her prior consent were not truly naturalized and would be treated as Turkish nationals when they returned to their country of origin. This was contrary to the position of the United States which admits no dual citizenship in regard to her citizens, native-born or naturalized.

Many times Armenian-Americans visiting the homeland were trapped in Turkey. Many were jailed indefinitely and harrassed unnecessarily.[1] Coupled with this problem was the alarming state of affairs in the Armenian provinces of Turkey and the suffering of her people. As a result the assistance of the United States government was sought in an attempt to save the Armenians in Turkey from suffering and death.[2]

The year 1903 ushered in more misfortune for the Armenians. The properties of the Holy See in Ēchmiadzin were confiscated by the Tzarist government, signaling another phase of the Russification policy in the Caucasus. This was followed by the Tartar movement, incited by the Russian government against the Armenians.

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[1] "Our Responsibilities Toward the Armenians," Armenia, I (August, 1905), 40-43.

[2] "The Armenian Delegation in Washington," Armenia, I (November, 1904), 27-33.

The impact of these events in the old country upon the immigrants in the United States was great. As a result, once again the church became the central focus of community activity.

1. The Confiscation of Armenian Church Properties in Armenia (1903)

The attempt at enforced Russification of the minorities living in Russia began in the days of Nicholas I (1825-1855). During the reign of Nicholas II (1894-1917) Russification became more systematic, especially when Prince Grigorii Golitzin was appointed Governor-General of the Caucasus in 1896. He declared war on the Armenians, ordering the close of their entire network of schools. Upon the recommendation of Prince Golitzin, Tzar Nicholas II issued a decree on June 12, 1903, confiscating Armenian Church properties.[1] Golitzin contended that part of the income was being devoted to the furtherance of the revolutionary movement in Turkey.[2] He regarded the Armenian Church as the bulwark of Armenian nationalism, since it provided a bond of unity for the nation to which all the Armenians were devotedly attached.

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[1] "The Return of Armenian Church and School Property," *Armenia*, I (August, 1905), 44-45.

[2] Kapriēl Lazian, *Hayasdan ew Hay Tadĕ* ("Armenia and the Armenian Question") (Cairo, Egypt: Nor Asdgh Press, 1946), pp. 127-133.

Thus by an order of Prince Golitzin the Viceroy, Prince Nakashidze, demanded that the Catholicos Khrimian Hayrig give to the police the title deeds of the Church's properties and the keys to the safe. The Catholicos refused, explaining that he was not the owner of the property, but only its trustee for the whole Armenian nation, not only in Russia but the world over. The police, at that point, forced themselves into the monastery of Ēchmiadzin, looted it, and subjected the aged and venerable Catholicos to shameful indignities.

The entire nation supported the Catholicos in his heroic stand. Reaction was immediate and overwhelming as thousands of Armenians walked from Erevan to Ēchmiadzin, a distance of fourteen miles, to express sympathy for what had transpired. Even anticlerical elements rose in defense of the Armenian Church in her struggle with the Moscovite Colossus, as did Armenians the world over.[1] The Armenian Patriarchate presented a Memorandum to Tzar Nicholas II on January 14, 1904.[2] Memorials protesting the injustice were organized in Persia, India, America, and countries of Europe. Complaints were heard from around the world since Ēchmiadzin and the other religious institutions in Armenia had been built through the corporate contributions of Armenian colonies in different continents throughout centuries.

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[1] Richard G. Hovannisian, Armenia on the Road to Independence (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 17-21.

[2] H. (pseud.), "The Day of Peril of the Armenian Church in Russia," Armenia, II (October, 1906), 37-47; II (November, 1906), 3-42.

The Armenian communities in the United States, under the leadership of Bishop Sarajian, held a convention wherein they prepared a memorandum to be forwarded to the Tzar through the Russian Embassy at Washington.[1]

On August 17, 1905, a cablegram from Tiflis sent by Catholicos Khrimian to Archbishop Sarajian of Worcester announced,

> "I am able to inform you that the Viceroy of the Caucasus has communicated to me that the Emperor has issued a ukase [decree] granting the return of the Armenian Church and school property on the basis of the law of the time of Kēork IV the Catholicos."[2]

The Russian autocracy had miscalculated and underestimated the unflinching attitude and vigorous resistance that could be shown by the venerable Catholicos and his people when their spiritual centers were molested.

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[1] "The Return of the Armenian Church and School Property," Armenia, I (August, 1905), 44-45.

[2] Ibid.; "Hayrigi Herhakirě" ("The Cablegramm of Hayrig"), Tzain Haireniatz, August 30, 1905.

2. Archbishop Sarajian, Delegate-at-Large

In May 1904, Catholicos Khrimian delegated two high ranking clergymen, Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian of America and Archbishop Sahag Ayvadian of Persia and India, to call upon the European powers and invite their attention to the alarming state of affairs in Armenia.[1] The two were accompanied by Dr. Jean Louis Melikoff who represented the Armenians in the Caucasus. It was decided that the Armenian deputation would conclude their mission by calling upon President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary Hay at the White House, hoping to enlist their aid in stopping the Turkish supression of the Armenian Church and people. During the absence of Archbishop Sarajian the Reverend Father Arsēn Vehouni of Providence was designated as Locum-Tenens.[2]

While the deputation was visiting the European dignitaries, the Sultan in Turkey summoned the Armenian Patriarch, Archbishop Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, to the palace and demanded an explanation concerning all knowledge of the scheme due to the interruption of communications between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin.[1] The Sultan was not satisfied with this reply and thus ordered that a wire be sent to the Catholicos in Ēchmiadzin demanding an end to the visit of the two Archbishops with the European Powers. Patriarch Ōrmanian argued that to interfere with the decision of the Catholicos was far beyond the sphere of his jurisdiction. Not to be quelled, the Sultan then summoned the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahag Khabaian II to the palace, and attempted to persuade him to intercede in the matter. The Sultan even went so far as to decorate the Catholicos, promising to make the See of Cilicia the Catholicate of All Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. Despite these pressures and offers, Catholicos Sahag remained firm and unyielding. The two heads of the Armenian herarchy resolutely kept their hands off that matter, knowing full well that their refusal would cost them their downfall and discredit.[2]

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[1] "The Armenian Deputation," *Armenia*, I (October, 1904), 40-41; "Vehap'arh Gat'oghigosi Goghmēn Ewrobayi Medz Dērout'iwnnerin Ghrgouadz Badouiragout'iwně" ("The Deputation Sent to European Powers by the Venerable Catholicos"), *Armenia*, August 6, 1904.

[2] "Hayer Amerigayi Mēch," ("Armenians in America"), *Armenia*, August 6, 1904.

On September 28, 1904, the Armenian delegation representing the Catholicos of All Armenians called upon President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. Their intent was to procure the moral committment and assistance of the United States government to intervene in Turkey and thereby ease the suffering of the Armenians. The President received the delegation most cordially and expressed his sympathy for the plight of the Armenians, but did not indicate any concrete steps he would take to aid them. The delegation presented to the President a personal letter from the Catholicos in which the pontiff appealed to the President to use the influence of his office to move the Great Powers of Europe to intercede and save his nation from further Turkish atrocities.[1] The two bishops also brought with them a weighty memorandum signed by prominent European statesmen, educators, publicists, and ordinary citizens, who in their turn urged President Roosevelt to come to the aid of the martyred nation.

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[1] "Sēmafori T'ght'agts'out'iwnĕ Haygagan Kordzerin Ngadmamp," ("The Report of Sēmafor Concerning the Armenian Affairs"), Armenia, August 27, 1904.

[2] "Gat'oghigosě ew Soultaně", ("The Catholicos and the Sultan"), Armenia, November 9, 1904.

James Bronson Reynolds, president of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, was instrumental in arranging the meeting with the President. He attended the interview with the two bishops and President Roosevelt. At the conclusion of the conference, the President asked Reynolds to remain, at which time he remarked to him:

> I am ashamed to do what I have just done ... I sympathize deeply with the cause of Armenia. I believe I was the first to make the statement that in the massacres of 1895 and 1896 the Armenians killed by the Turks outnumbered the killed on both sides in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. But mere kind words such as these men have received everywhere are valueless. What they need and what alone will help them is to send a fleet of battleships to Constantinople. To such a protest alone the Turks will listen. Unfortunately you know and I know that the Senate will not sanction such action.[2]

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[1] "The Armenian Delegation in Washington," Armenia, I (November, 1904), 27-33.

[2] James Bronson Reynolds, "Roosevelt and Armenia," The New Armenia, XIV (November-December, 1922), 81.

D. Church and Politics: The Critics of the Primate

The period of Sarajian's primacy was the high-water mark of Armenian political parties and their factional influence, not only in the life of the community but also in ecclesiastical matters. They created dissension in the communities in Worcester, New York, Providence and Boston on political grounds and mobilized all their efforts, time, and energy to this end. They did not hesitate to discredit the clergy in the eyes of the public. Journalism was their weapon. As time passed, the breach between the political parties and the Church widened to such an extent that the spiritual life of the Church often came to a standstill. The basic reason for this "undeclared war" was due to the fact that only a small portion of the people had pledged their allegiance to them, while the majority preferred to remain aloof from revolutionary activities and stay faithful to the fellowship of the Church.[1] The internal conflicts within the parties themselves also deterred many immigrants from uniting with them.

In many instances Armenian businessmen were harrassed and intimidated by the members of political parties because they did not support their revolutionary activities financially. One major charge made by the political parties against the Church was that she was too conservative. They regarded Archbishop Sarajian as the personification of arch-conservatism who had to be eliminated at any cost. Both the *Veragazmeal Hnch'agean* and the *Tashnagts'agan* parties made full use of their newspapers in repudiating the Primate.[1] The editor of *Tzain Haireniatz*, K. B. Ch'it'jian, a Hnch'agean follower, has noted in one of his editorials that T'ovmas Ch'arshafjian, later editor of the Tashnag paper *Hairenik*, invited him to join forces to ridicule and ostracize Archbishop Sarajian to such an extent that he be forced to leave the United States for abroad.[2]

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[1] Varoujan, "Ov Ē Amerigahay Kaghts'geghě," ("Who is the Cancer of the Armenians of America"), Arax, March 31, 1906, pp. 171-172.

Another criticism directed against Archbishop Sarajian asserted that he had too close and intimate a friendship with well-to-do persons.[3] Allegedly the Primate had persuaded his rich friends not to render financial assistance to the political parties.

On October 21, 1905, as the Archbishop was about to retire to his quarters at the Union Square Hotel in New York, a young person forced his way into the room, threatening him with a revolver. He proceeded to tell the Primate, "I come to inform you on behalf of our party, the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag, that we are determined to eliminate any obstacle that lies in our path."[1] The Archbishop replied most calmly, "I am not one to fear death, for from the day when I knelt before the altar to receive my cowl of celibacy, I ceased to live for the mundane."[2]

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[1] Hovhannēs Ch'ōbanian, "Amerigahay K'aghts'geghě" ("The Cancer of Armenians of America"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, January 17, 1906.

[2] K. B. Ch'it'jian, "Panawor Grhiw! Azniv Zēnk," ("Rational Fight! A Noble Weapon") *Tzain Haireniatz*, April 7, 1900.

[3] Editorial, "Hay Ggherě Ardasahmani Mēch" ("The Armenian Clergy in the Diaspora"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, June 14, 1905, pp. 1-2.

The Veragazmeal Hnch'agean Party further criticized the Archbishop through a series of editorials appearing in the newspaper *Tzain Haireniatz*. They attacked him vehemently, hoping to expedite his resignation from the primacy.[3] Early in 1906 the stage was set for a final showdown. The critics of the Primate did not hesitate to call him "an aged Asian *sōft'a*, [outcast] who in his senility had already ceased effectively to function as Primate." They continued to add the following remarks:

> For our part, let it once and for all be promulgated that ... our columns be henceforth closed to all messages, appeals, and announcements which allude to the 'Primacy' of Sarajian. And thus we initiate this policy by refusing to publish an appeal by the 'Primate Sarajian on behalf of our needy brethren in the Caucasus.'[4]

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[1] Rhosdom, "Namag Niw-Eork'ēn," ("Letter from New York"), *Arax*, November 11, 1907, pp. 21-22.

[2] Dikran Mgount, "Our Gert'ank'," ("Where are We Heading"), *Armenia*, March 22, 1905.

[3] Editorial, "Hay Ggherě Ardasahmani Mēch," ("The Armenian Clergy in the Diaspora"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, May 24, 1905, p. 1; June 7, 1905, pp. 1-2; June 14, 1905, pp. 102; June 28, 1905, p. 1.

[4] "Amōt' Mě," ("An Infamy"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, February 21, 1906, p. 1.

Despite his denunciation of the political parties, the Primate came to be liked by many for his honesty and sincerity.[1] Nonetheless, his personal integrity, administrative abilities, and ecclesiastical leadership became the subject for many intense debates during the Diocesan Convention of 1906 which he ordered convened, but over which he did not preside. The delegates, led by a Veragazmeal Hnch'ag contingency, stormed into the Convention, ready to obtain the Archbishop's resignation.

E. Developments in the Church

With the passage of time, the problems of the primacy grew more acute and the criticism more vituperative. The majority of the people, however, were sympathetic to their Archbishop who continued to operate in his own way.[2] On September 2, 1906, he convened the Second Diocesan Convention in the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Worcester. Prior to the Convention he forwarded a letter to Father Bōghos Kaft'anian, instructing him to preside over the Convention and to proceed with the task of electing a new Primate. He cited reasons of ill-health and fatigue for his resignation. He also expressed the hope that the Convention would immediately notify the Catholicos of this matter so that His Holiness could make the necessary arrangements for a new Primate for the Diocese.[1]

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[1] Rhosdom, "Namag Niw-Eorkēn," Arax, November 11, 1907, pp. 21-22.

[2] *Ibid.*

On the opening day of the Convention the Primate was in West Hoboken, New Jersey. The delegates, who were concerned by the Primate's absence, passed a resolution condemning his negligence.[2] This issue afforded the Primate's protagonists an excellent opportunity to enfeeble the position of his adherents. During four tense and stormy sessions the delegates attacked the incumbent Archbishop for his failure to supply sound leadership and his lack of competency in dealing with matters which posed a challenge to his office. The following list of shortcomings were compiled by the delegates.

1. The Archbishop's unwillingness to execute the Constitution.

2. His reluctance to enroll Armenian students in theological seminaries to prepare for the sacred priesthood.

3. His indecisiveness in all matters.

4. His indifference to criticism directed against him.

5. His apathy toward the parishes and his biased treatment of his flock.

On the other hand, the Convention also pointed out a positive side of the Primate and the problems he faced.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Azt," ("Official Notice"), Tzain Hairen-iatz, September 12, 1906.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn Eresp'okhanagan Ĕnthanour Zhoghovoy," ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention"), Worcester, Mass., September 2, 1906, p. 4.

1. His deep commitment and love for the church and his demeanor as a pious and honorable cleric.

2. The difficulties of the religious life of the Diocese.

3. Lack of financial means for the Diocese.[1]

Before the adjournment of the Convention the delegates passed a final resolution, worded most forcefully, in which they condemned the primacy of Archbishop Sarajian and unanimously accepted his resignation. By majority vote Father Bōghos K'aft'anian was chosen to the office of Locum-Tenens. According to the twenty-second article of the Constitution, the delegates requested from the Catholicos a slate of three nominees for the post of Primate, which would include the name of Archbishop Eznig Abahouni.[2] Amid crises and controversy Archbishop Sarajian's administration came to an end and political factions could not be absolved from major complicity in it.[3] Under the name of Father Bōghos K'aft'anian in the "Artsanakrout'iwn" appears a line which reads, "I sign, without agreeing, but as president." It gives a clue to the deep underlying conflict which expressed itself in the entire controversy over the primacy of Sarajian.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn Eresp'okhanagan Ěnthanour Zhoghovoy," Worcester, Mass., September 3, 1906, pp. 6-7.

[3] "Mēt'odě," ("The Method"), The *Gotchnag*, March 2, 1907, p. 131; "T'ght'agts'out'iwn Ousdrēn," ("Report from Worcester"), The *Gotchnag*, September 15, 1906, p. 589; September 22, 1906, p. 605.

When the news of the Primate's resignation reached Ēchmiadzin it was not at all favorably received by the Catholicos. The appeal for a new primate was rejected and the Catholicos even annulled the proceedings of the Convention, declaring them unconstitutional.[2] Upon the repeated insistence of Archbishop Sarajian that he be relieved of his duties, the Catholicos finally yielded and ordered the authorities in America to proceed with the election of a new primate. The Catholicos had nominated Archbishop Eznig Abahouni and Kēork Iwt'iwjian for the slate, asking that a third name be supplied by the Armenians of America. Simultaneously, he ordered Archbishop Sarajian to remain at his post until the arrival of the new primate. As an expression of his genuine sentiment and paternal sympathy for the ex-primate, the Catholicos sent him an episcopal ring, set with a ruby, and inscribed with the words, "Tend my sheep."[3]

After his resignation Archbishop Sarajian remained in the United States for five years, during which he served various parishes throughout the country. He was invited to the Holy Cross Church in West Hoboken, New Jersey to serve as pastor. From April 1908 to 1911 he served at the Holy Trinity Church in Fresno, California. A year later, upon the request of the people of Van in Turkey, the Locum Tenens of the Mother See of Ēchmiadzin instructed Sarajian to depart from America to serve in the Diocese of Van. An obituary dated November 3, 1913, issued by the Diocese, reported the death of Archbishop Sarajian on October 2, 1913 in Van, Turkey.[1]

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn Eresp'okhanagan Ěnthanour Zhoghovoy," Worcester, Mass., September 3, 1906, p. 8.

[2] "Amerigayi Hayeri Arhachnort'out'iwně," ("The Primacy of the Armenians of America"), Armenia, December 26, 1906.

[3] "Amerigayi Hayeri Arhachnort'out'iwně," ("The Primacy of the Armenians of America"), Armenia, April 10, 1907.

F. Expansion of Churches

This section of each chapter, hereafter, will be concerned only with those Armenian Churches which were consecrated during the incumbency of each Primate or Locum-Tenens. According to Armenian Church tradition, the anniversary of a church is observed on the date of consecration rather than the date of construction. Those churches which were rebuilt or purchased at a later date or have had addition of new buildings will be discussed in the period of their initial consecration.

During the primacy of Archbishop Sarajian one church was consecrated, the Holy Trinity Church in Fresno, California, in 1900. Saint John the Chrysostom Church in New York City will be treated here also, although the building was simply rented in April, 1900. No sources indicate whether the church was consecrated at a later date or for how long it was in use. The Armenians of Providence used their community center for religious services. In addition to these communities, there were other cities with large Armenian populations, such as Boston, Lawrence, Troy, and Chicago, where church services were held in rented halls or local Protestant or Episcopal churches. Visiting clergy served these communities.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan," ("Official Notice"), The Gotchnag, November 15, 1913, p. 1114.

Although these communities often expressed a great desire to own their churches, they were unable to do so because of several reasons which hindered their acquisition of an Armenian Church.

First, the years from 1898 to 1906 witnessed a heavy influx of Armenian immigration to America. This necessitated both individual and corporate assistance by the local Armenians to the newcomers as well as to their family and relatives in the homeland. Second, the era was characterized by intense Armenian revolutionary propaganda in America as well as the Armenian diaspora. The youth were indoctrinated with revolutionary ideology and all efforts were concentrated upon the purchase of arms, revolutionary enterprises, and reconstruction of the homeland. Often wealthy Armenians were threatened by Tashnags and Veragazmeal Hnch'ags to provide financial assistance to revolutionary activities, and many fell victim to their belligerence.[1] They were accused of collaborating with clergymen against the revolutionaries.[2] The near-total neglect of religion by the Tashnag leadership and their own recognition of the socio-political problems and needs of the Armenians in America convinced them of the need for acquiring community centers rather than churches.[3] Church building was considered a disastrous venture to be fought by all levels of the community and by all means at their disposal. The Veragazmeal Hnch'ag leadership, on the other hand, manifested indifference toward church-building efforts, but its followers favored the building of churches.

1. Saint John Chrysostom Church
New York, New York

As early as 1834 the first Armenian student, Khach'adour Osganian, had settled in New York City. Within the next decade Armenian students, merchants, and workers came to the city in pursuit of better fortunes and opportunities. According to a list compiled from the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Immigration from 1899 to 1917, out of a total of 55,057 Armenians, 17,891 indicated their intention of remaining in the state of New York.[1] A vast majority of these immigrants became successful in their chosen careers as lawyers, doctors, engineers, professors, and skilled laborers. Armenian political groups became very active and educational and charitable organizations, as well as the Armenian language press, flourished.[2]

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[1] "Namag Niw-Eōrk'ēn" ("Letter from New York"), *The Gotchnag*, August 3, 1907, pp. 491-492.

[2] M. Minasian, "Ggheragan T'alanĕ," ("The Clerical Plunder"), *Hairenik*, March 10, 1900.

[3] Editorial, "Vdankĕ" ("The Danger"), *Hairenik*, August 3, 1901.

As early as the 1880s the Armenians in New York rivaled those of Worcester in exerting influence in the religious sphere. Despite their financial advantages, the Armenians in New York did not acquire their own church until 1921. Their religious needs were administered to by temporary pastors. When Archbishop Sarajian arrived in New York on October 7, 1898, as Primate of the Diocese, Father Khat Markarian was in charge of the parish.[3] The facilities of Saint John Chrysostom Episcopal Church on West 41st Street were being used. Although they were allowed the use of St. John Church, the people were intent on obtaining a place of their own. However, the community was divided over this issue. The Tashnags opposed the purchase of a church and considered such an expenditure unwise and unwarranted. Rather, they encouraged the youth against such a move and attempted to undermine the endeavor. The youth were reminded that their commitment ought to be to revolutionary ideology rather than to religion.[1] The non-Tashnag element, on the other hand, supported the idea and showed great interest in the acquisition of a church. Of this group, the Veragazmeal Hnch'ags displayed a passive indifference.

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[1] Malcom, The Armenians in America, pp. 71-72.

[2] The Armenian Colonial Association of New York City, with a branch in Chicago, was a most useful institution. It was started in 1909 and was supported by a group of wealthy Armenians. The Association provided valuable services to incoming immigrants at Ellis Island by securing employment for them and extending financial aid to the needy.

[3] Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egeghets'aganout'iwně," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě, 1912, p. 113.

It was in this tense atmosphere that the Church Trustees resolved in 1900 to rent Saint John Church for $1200 a year to provide for regular church services and better organization within the community.[2] On April 1, 1900, Archbishop Sarajian celebrated Divine Liturgy. A large throng attended to hear the Archbishop praise the efforts of the community to acquire their own place of worship. He exhorted the people to participate in the expenses and not rely solely upon the wealthy. He then invited the chairman, Hovhannēs Tawshanjian, to speak and initiate the fund raising. The total contributions amounted to $1620 on that day. It was in 1921 that the Armenians of New York acquired their own church, Saint Illuminator Church, on 27th Street.

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[1] Minasian, "Ggheragan T'alaně," *Hairenik*, March 10, 1900.

[2] "Pats'oumen Sourp Hovhannēs Haygagan Egeghets'woy Niw-Eōrk'i ("The Opening of Saint John Armenian Church in New York"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, April 14, 1900.

2. Holy Trinity Church, Fresno, California

The earliest Armenian settlers in Fresno were two brothers, Hagop and Garabed Seropian.[1] Originally from Merzofan, Turkey, they moved from Worcester to Fresno in 1881. A year later three other young Seropians left Worcester to join their brothers in Fresno. The news of the success of the Seropian brothers encouraged others to follow in their footsteps. In the latter part of the 1880s Armenian immigrants began to migrate directly from the homeland to Fresno and other parts of California. These Armenians found employment in agriculture. Their letters to friends and relatives in the East and the homeland told of the deep rich soil, cheap land, and ideal climate of California.[2] Consequently, by the 1890s some two-hundred Armenians had settled in Fresno and were engaged in fruit farming, especially in the production of grapes, figs, peaches, and apricots. Today a large number of these successful Armenians own great vineyards which produce table grapes, wine, and varieties of raisins.[3]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutě ew ir Dzakoumnerě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ē*, 1912, pp. 56-63.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 60; Haygag Eginian, "Amerigahay Hoghakordzoutiwne Khaghaghagani Ap'ants' Vray" ("Farming by Armenians on the Shores of the Pacific"), *Amerigahay Darets'oytse*, 1912, pp. 220-234.

[3] William Saroyan, an American writer and playwright and Pulitzer Prize winner, was born in Fresno in 1908 to Armenian immigrant parents. In his short stories he has portrayed rather whimsically and sentimentally the way of life of these people. Typical of this is the book entitled *My Name is Aram* by William Saroyan, printed in 1940.

The first Armenian organization formed in Fresno was the Library Union whose aim was to foster education and to preserve the Armenian identity among the young immigrants.[1] The Library Union acquired its modest building in 1892 where immigrants gathered for study and social activities.[2]

As early as 1883 religious activities appeared to have taken place. The members of the Armenian Church attended the First Congregational Church with their Protestant brethren until disagreements broke out in the late 1880s.[3] The Armenian Protestants then joined the local Presbyterian Church, and the members of the Armenian Church used the library building for worship.[4] Father Aharon Meklonian, who came to the United States in 1894, was the first Armenian priest to serve the community of Fresno. Since there was no church, services were often held on the prairies or river banks.

By the late 1890s the need for an Armenian Church building intensified and consequently, a Building Committee was organized in October 1899.[1] On February 25, 1900, the first Board of Church Trustees was elected. On April 1, 1900, the ceremonies of the laying of the foundation of the Church took place. The new church was located on the corner of "F" and Monterey Streets. Primate Sarajian consecrated the new edifice on October 14, 1900, and named it the Holy Trinity Church.[2] The Primate remained in Fresno for several months and attended to the organization of the Parish. A Membership Meeting of the Holy Trinity Church was convened on December 16, 1900, at which time a new Board of Church Trustees was elected. On December 22 the incorporation of the Church according to the laws of California was completed.[3]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 60.

[2] Vahe Haig, ed., Houshamadean ("Souvenir Book") (Fresno, 1953).

[3] No definite reasons are offered for the estrangement. Seropian notes that a missionary named Collins contributed to the deepening of differences among the two groups. Another writer, P'. A. Atamian, notes that the minister and church officials complained against the Armenians for the strong aroma of their food. Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egeghets'aganout'iwnĕ, 1888-1911, Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 123.

[4] Haig, Houshamadean.

For the next eight years three priests served the community of Fresno. Father Sahag Nazarēt'ian served the parish from 1902 to 1906, when he retired. His successor was Father T'eotoros Isahagian who served for eleven months, from January - December 1907, before he resigned.[4] Archbishop Sarajian, who had resigned from the Primacy in 1906, now assumed the pastorate of the Holy Trinity Church in April, 1908, where he remained until his departure from the

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoute ew ir Dzakoumnere," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'e, 1912, p. 64.

[2] V.M. Ch'arshafjian, "T'ghtagts'out'iwnner" ("Reports"), Hairenik, April 14, 1900.

[3] "Articles of the Incorporation of the Trinity Armenian Church of Fresno," Issued on December 22, 1900.

[4] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoute," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'e, 1912, pp. 66-68.

United States in May 1911. During his stay in Fresno, Archbishop Sarajian laid the plans for a monastery in Fresno for the training of seminarians. However, no definite steps were taken toward the realization of that dream and it was discarded as unrealistic by his critics.[1]

Archbishop Sarajian was succeeded by Father Vartan Kasbarian of Bursa, Turkey, who arrived in Fresno on April 6, 1912.[2] Under the guidance of the new pastor, the Church Trustees formulated plans for the building of a new church and organized a Building Committee under the chairmanship of Hagop Nshigian. Land was purchased on the corner of "M" and Ventura Streets.

On July 9, 1913,fire swept the Holy Trinity Church and it was claimed a total loss.[3] Armenians of the parish were allowed use of a local Episcopalian Church. Plans soon were undertaken for the construction of a new church and on November 1, 1913, groundbreaking ceremonies took place. The cornerstone of the new edifice was laid on January 4, 1914. The membership of the parish contributed $10,000 toward the expenses of the building. On December 13, 1914, the new church--The Holy Trinity--was consecrated by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian. Father Vartan Kasbarian remained as pastor until

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Haig, Houshamadean.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

1934 when he resigned because of internal strife which swept the Armenian Church in the United States after the murder of Archbishop Ghewont Tourian, Primate of the Diocese, on December 24, 1933. Within the Holy Trinity Church the rival segments, the Tashng and Rhamgavar Parties, became embroiled in conflicts which resulted in feuding and dissension. The new pastor, Father Kegham Kasimian, arrived amidst this turmoil from Saint James Seminary in Jerusalem. His sympathies lay with the Tashnag Party, thereby further dividing the people. In February,1937,Archbishop Karekin Hovsēpian, Plenipotentiary to the Catholicos, arrived in Fresno in an attempt to reconcile the rival segments within the Church. His efforts, however, were fruitless and the people remained divided.

The division became official when the non-Tashnag Armenians, on July 2, 1939, withdrew and formed their own parish, later known as St. Paul's Armenian Parish of Fresno. On March 31, 1940, the new parish applied and was accepted for membership into the Western Diocese of California. Father Arsēn Torosian was made temporary pastor and facilities of the local Episcopal Church were used. In July 1943, St. Paul's parish purchased the First Armenian Presbyterian Church on Fulton and Santa Clara Streets. Father Nersēs Odian of Detroit arrived on November 29, 1947 to serve as pastor of the Church. One year later the community had grown to such a degree that the need was felt for a new church.

Consequently, a Building Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Khach'ig Ch'oukhajian and efforts were concentrated for the next several years upon fund raising activities. In October, 1952, a First Baptist Church was purchased for $75,000 and the acquisition of the church was finalized on August 30, 1953. It underwent a complete renovation and was consecrated on January 23-24, 1954. Archbishop Diran Nersoyian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, presided at the ceremonies which marked another milestone in the history of the Armenian Church in America.

G. Summary and Conclusion

In sum, the end of the nineteenth century saw the formal establishment of an Armenian Church diocese in America. The first Primate, Bishop Sarajian, was no stranger to the problems of the immigrant church since he had been its very first pastor. In view of this, Sarajian's return to the United States should be regarded as an act of courage. Once settled in his new post, the Bishop began the tasks of institutional development and administrative reform. Specifically, his achievements included the convocation of the first clergy conference and diocesan assembly, the promulgation of a constitution, and the centralization of church authority.

Two other areas occupied the Primate. The first was involvement in lobbying efforts to marshall United States support vis-à-vis Turkey and Russia, both of which were pursuing repressive policies toward the Armenians. The Bishop's second area of activity centered on the Armenian political parties which had spared no effort to undermine the authority of the Church and its leadership.

The resignation of the Primate in 1906 once again manifested the disruptive power of the political parties which, despite their small following, had been able to throw the community and the Church into virtual *immobilism*. Unfortunately, this pattern of relationships was destined to continue until the eve of the Great War.

CHAPTER V

TRYING YEARS (1906-1913)

During the period between 1906 and 1913 neither the Armenian Church nor the Armenian communities changed very drastically. Father Bōghos Kaft'anian, once a Catholic priest who had converted to the orthodox faith, was one of the controversial figures of the time. Although respected for his eloquence and seniority both clergy and the majority of the people still had reservations concerning his conversion. Another controversial clergyman was Archbishop Eznig Abahouni, whose wiles grew more whimsical with age. He remained in office only one month, much to the dismay of his supporters, and then returned to the homeland. Archbishop Moushegh Seropian, a gifted and scholarly person, renewed the centuries-old feud between the two Holy Sees of Ēchmiadzin and Cilicia.

Each of these three men, in his own time, enjoyed the support and respect of his followers, but also, however, contributed to the suffering and turmoil of the Church. Each was afforded the opportunity to contribute to the spiritual growth and welfare of the Church, but was so involved in intrigues, that he failed to fulfill what was expected of him.

Amidst all the dissension, bitter quarreling, and conflict there was perhaps a lesson to be gained for all. It was necessary for the Church to view her situation realistically and to meet the challenge of providing spiritual nourishment to the uprooted immigrants of the Armenian colonies in America which were steadily growing in number each day.

A. Period of Locum-Tenens: Father Bōghos Kaft'anian (1906-1908)

As understood in Chapter IV, after Archbishop Sarajian's resignation, Father Bōghos Kaft'anian, pastor of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, assumed the duties of Locum-Tenens. At the same time, Father Kaft'anian continued with his duties as pastor of the Worcester Church.

This period of Locum-Tenens was an extremely intense and turbulent interim for the Armenian Church in America. Political "civil war" plagued nearly every Armenian community. Armenian political factions were struggling for power and domination within the Church and communities alike. The Tashnag Party was unyielding in its aggressive and uncompromising attitudes against the Church. It directed its bitter criticism against both the Church and clergy, referring to them as obsolete objects in Armenian life, to be discarded at any cost.[1] The Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party similarly attacked the clergy as being too conservative.

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[1] Zog-Dērvish, "Amerigayi Arhach'nortout'iwnĕ" ("The Primacy of America"), Hairenik, June 21, 1907.

This was the atmosphere during which Father Kaft'anian entered office as Locum-Tenens. Each rival organization vied for his loyalty, favor, and support. However, Father Kaft'anian was unable to remain aloof from all these proceedings and worked according to his own philosophy to restore peace to an exhausted Church and community. Kaft'anian was born in 1863 in Constantinople and received his religious training at the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarists Monastery in St. Lazarre, Venice, Italy. This was a center of the Armenian Uniate Church loyal to Rome. Prior to his coming to the United States, he had held several administrative and pastoral posts at the Monastery in Italy and Constantinople. He appealed to Archbishop Sarajian in May, 1904, to be received into the Armenian Church. The Primate notified Ēchmiadzin and Constantinople of Father Kaft'anian's intentions and asked them to consider the matter.[1] Catholicos Khrimian, in an Encyclical dated June 25, 1904, received Father Kaft'anian into the fold of the Armenian Church in the capacity of an ordained priest.[2] On January 29, 1905, Father Kaft'anian was officially received into the Diocese of the Armenian Church in America. During the ceremony of re-institution Archbishop Sarajian replaced the Roman Catholic beret with the cowl of celibacy of the Armenian Church.

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[1] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn Arhach'nortagan T'emin Hayots' Amerigayi, p. 23. See also Pambouk'ian, "Niwt'er Amerigahay Kaghout'i Badmout'ean Hamar," p. 3.

[2] Pambouk'ian, "Niwt'er Amerigahay Kaghout'i Badmout'ean Hamar," p. 4.

As mentioned previously, the feuding Armenian factions had created an atmosphere of tension and confusion in the communities. These conflicts resulted in a major incident with far reaching national effects. Wealthy Armenians had been approached by revolutionaries for financial assistance. If they rejected this advance the political parties resorted to violence and extortion. A political terrorist of the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party committed an assassination that endangered the reputation of the law abiding, industrious, and sagacious Armenian community. Hovhannēs T'awshanjian, a well known Armenian businessman of New York, became the victim of blind hatred.[1] During the trial that followed this killing, it was revealed that Father Ghewont Martougēsian, pastor in New York and a Veragazmeal Hnch'ag activist, had also been an accomplice in the assassination. He had a long record of involvement in revolutionary activities, since the days when he had been a Protestant preacher. The court sentenced him to two years of hard labor. Archbishop Sarajian, a close friend of T'awshanjian, notified the Catholicos at Ēchmiadzin of the happening and demanded stern pontifical action against this priest.

A telegram arrived from Ēchmiadzin on August 3, 1907, which read as follows: "In accordance with your request, we have defrocked Martougēsian."[1] The Court pronounced further charges against Martougēsian and found him guilty of conspiring to murder Mihran Karagēosian, a New York industrialist, in 1905, when the latter had refused to assist the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party.[2] It was this party that had waged a fierce war against the former Primate, Archbishop Sarajian, advocating the candidacy of Archbishop Eznig Abahouni whose nationalistic and revolutionary tendencies they considered to be expressions of his high personal qualifications.

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[1] "Namag Amerigayi Miats'eal Nahanknerēn" ("Letter from the United States of America"), Armenia, February 15, 1905.

B. Short Lived Primacy of Archbishop Eznig Abahouni (1908, September-October)

On January 18, 1907, Archbishop Sarajian once more notified Ēchmiadzin of his resignation, pleading with the Catholicos to relieve him of his duties. The Catholicos finally confirmed it, although reluctantly. An Encyclical dated February 16, 1907, ordered Archbishop Sarajian to remain at his post until the arrival of the new Primate. The Catholicos also instructed him to convene a Diocesan Convention as soon as possible to elect a new Primate. The two nominees sent by the Catholicos were Archbishop Eznig Abahouni and Archbishop Kēork Iwt'iwjian. The Assembly was given the right to select the third candidate.

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[1] "Medz Ojrhakordzout'iwně" ("The Great Crime"), Hairenik, August 3, 1907.

[2] Father Ghewont remained a defrocked priest until 1916. He presented his plea to the Catholicos Kēork V in Ēchmiadzin who viewed his case and reinstated him to the priesthood after a year of penitence. See "Gat'oghigosagan Gontag" ("Catholicossal Encyclical"), Bahag, Vol. VI, No. 38, 1916.

Consequently, the Third Diocesan Convention convened on May 30, 1907 in Worcester, Massachusetts, presided over by Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian, with fifteen delegates in attendance. Archbishop Sarajian declined to have his name added to the slate of nominees. Consequently, Abahouni was unanimously elected to be the new Primate.[1] The results of the election were dispatched to Ēchmiadzin by Archbishop Sarajian. In America news of the election generated both satisfaction and despair among the people. The supporters of Sarajian opposed the tactics employed by the supporters of the newly elected Primate. They petitioned by collecting four thousand signatures which they forwarded to the Catholicos in Ēchmiadzin, requesting that he not confirm the election. However, the dissension subsided as time passed. Meanwhile, Catholicos Khrimian confirmed the election of Abahouni by an encyclical in 1907 and notified the Central Executive Committee to forward travel expenses for the Archbishop.[2] Born in 1843 at Kum Kapu, Istanbul, Turkey, he received his education in

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[1] Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egeghets'aganout'iwnĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 117; "Hayer Hameriga" ("Armenians in America"), Armenia, June 29, 1906.

[2] Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 118.

Istanbul. In 1866 he entered the Noubar Shalmazanan Seminary in Istanbul and was subsequently ordained by Bishop Nersēs Varjabedian. He was elected Primate of Rodosto in 1873. In 1876 he was elected Primate of Arapkis, where his revolutionary outbursts soon attracted the attention of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. On May 2, 1879 he was elevated to the episcopacy and served as Primate in Arapgir until 1891. In 1891 he was assigned as Bishop Diarbekir by the Patriarch. A year later he was banished to Jerusalem by the Sultan where he stayed until 1895. He returned to Istanbul in 1896, where again he was searched and arrested for possession of an arms cache as a result of a revolutionary incident in which a band of Armenians had seized the Ottoman Bank. He was released the same year as a result of an amnesty on the occasion of the installation of Maghak'ia Ōrmaman as the new Patriarch. In 1905 he fled to Egypt and passed on to Ēchmiadzin where the Catholicos Khriman designated him as Bishop of Azerbaijan.[1]

For some strange reason the travel allotment from America did not reach Abahouni in time and fifteen long months elapsed between Abahouni's election and his arrival in the United States. His sudden departure from America after only a stay of one month further bewildered and dismayed his staunch supporters. From the beginning mixed feelings existed toward this churchman. He headed the list of nominees for Bishop for America and was regarded as a man of remarkable courage and stamina. However, those who supported him overlooked the fact that he was now a tired and ailing sixty-five year old man. His antagonists considered him to be an old, ambitious, stubborn, and uncompromising person. When the news of his election reached overseas, a well known Armenian writer, Arp'iar Arp'iarian, authored a satirical article in which he challenged the competency of Archbishop Abahouni.[1]

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[1] "Azkayin Geank'ě" ("National Life"), Dajar, March 2, 1913, pp. 116-117; Chift'ē Saraf, "Verchin Hampoyrě," ("The Last Kiss"), Dajar, March 16, 1913, pp. 129-131.

The newly elected Primate waited fifteen months in Egypt for his travel expenses to be sent. Finally a letter dated July 2, 1908, from Archbishop Abahouni, addressed to the Diocese in Worcester, informed them that he was leaving Alexandria on July 16 for Le Havre in France, to sail for America. He arrived in New York on August 21, 1908, and two days later the people of Worcester welcomed their new Primate.[2] Almost immediately he met difficulties because four days before the Convention which was scheduled for September 6, it was postponed indefinitely. Archbishop Abahouni then traveled to New York, whereupon Dr. P'arhnag

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[1] Menawor, (pseud.), "Namag Amerigayi Miats'eal Nakanknerēn" ("Letter from the United States of America"), Armenia, November 25, 1908, p. 398.

[2] Menawor, (pseud.), "Hantisawor Zhamanoum Amerigayi Srpazan Arhach'nortin" ("Official Arrival of the Primate of America"), Armenia, September 9, 1908.

Atamian, Chairman of the Diocesan Board in Worcester, was summoned there on September 22 for the discussion of a very crucial matter.[1]

Upon his arrival in New York Dr. Atamian found everything in readiness for the departure of Archbishop Abahouni. The doctor pleaded that the Convention be convened and the Primate submit his resignation officially. However, Archbishop Abahouni remained steadfast in his decision. Two episodes had occurred which reflect his state of mind and may have prompted the Archbishop's decision.

On September 5, 1908, Abahouni celebrated Divine Liturgy in the Holy Cross Church in West Hoboken, New Jersey. His sermon was rather strange in tone and highly critical and satirical. He contended that his delay in arriving in America was due to an epidemic of cholera which had broken out in the port city of Batum, Russia. He also alluded to the fact that he had served as Primate of Azerbaijan in Persia prior to his coming to the United States. To a stunned congregation he announced:

> You stole me from them, and I, Eznig, persistent and steadfast in my purpose was forced to leave my flock. You, not I, are responsible for this delay in my arrival at my post. I have finally arrived in America and have assumed my duties as Primate. If you heed my counsel and cooperate with my plans, then and only then will I remain as your Primate. However, if you treat me as you did my predecessor, Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian, then I will not remain here another second. The steamship that brought me here is ready to take me back

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[1] Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egeghets'aganout'iwnĕ," Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 121.

> immediately. A Primate's duty is to lead his people, and they, in their turn, must follow their leader. If the people attempt to lead the Primate, alas that they should think that way.[1]

The second episode occurred in New York City during an observance in honor of the new Turkish Constitution. Archbishop Abahouni's well wishes for the health and longevity of Sultan Hamid met vociferous disapproval from the audience.

These two factors stripped Abahouni of the support of his former admirers and beset his path with difficulties. Consequently, he submitted his resignation to Father Kaft'anian on September 27, 1908. He had held office for only one month. He stated in his letter that he found his health too weak and the challenges too overwhelming to continue in his duties as Primate and to administer properly the national and ecclesiastical needs of the Diocese.[2] On October 8, 1908, the Archbishop boarded the ship which would return him to his homeland, leaving a Diocese thoroughly enmeshed in bitter quarrels and mass confusion and surrounded by a plethora of evils. Once again it was the start of a scandalous situation in the life of the Church, resulting in a variety of unfortunate ramifications.

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[1] Dajad, "Namag Miats'eal Nahanknerēn" ("Letter from the United States"), Armenia, October 7, 1908.

[2] "Hrajarakire" ("Letter of Resignation"), The Gotchnag, October 17, 1908, p. 670.

C. Dark Events (1908-1911)

An official notice issued in 1908 by the Church trustees in Worcester signaled the future course of events of the Diocese. The days ahead looked gloomy. The notice declared that Father Bōghos Kaft'anian was only in charge of the pastorate of the Church of Our Saviour in Worcester. Since the community alone provided the salary for the priest, then it was safe to assume that Father Kaft'anian's prime obligation was to his own parish. The problem of the Locum-Tenens was not their concern and was outside the sphere of their immediate interest. It was further announced that if Father Kaft'anian needed to visit cities he must notify the Parish Council as to his intent.[1]

Two years later, in 1911, the Worcester Church again challenged Father Kaft'anian as the Locum-Tenens. Soon other parishes joined in the opposition to his authority. No compromise was possible; it was a showdown and Father Kaft'anian was the loser.

It must be stated for background purposes that on December 3, 1909, the new Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Madt'ēos Izmirliants' II, issued his first encyclical concerning the Diocese of the Armenian Church in America.[2]

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Dzanouts'oum," ("Official Notice"), The Gotchnag, January 25, 1908, p. 61.

[2] "Gat'oghigosagan Gontagĕ," ("The Encyclical of the Catholicos"), The Gotchnag, January 22, 1910, p. 94.

This encyclical was forwarded to Father Kaft'anian who was instructed to take immediate steps to convene a Diocesan Convention in order to elect a new Primate. Since Archbishop Abahouni was now confined to his sick bed and therefore unable to attend to his duties, the Catholicos considered his resignation automatic.[1] The election of a new Primate was imperative. Furthermore, the Catholicos urged the Locum-Tenens to provide pertinent data concerning the size and number of parishes in the Diocese, a list of clergy, information on Armenian schools in the United States, and general statistics on Armenian communities in America. To comply with the wish of Catholicos Izmirliants', Father Kaft'anian instructed the pastors and the Church trustees by means of a letter that the Diocesan Convention would be held on February 22, 1910.[2]

The Convention convened in West Hoboken, New Jersey, and was presided over by the Locum-Tenens.[3] A detailed report was prepared to be forwarded to the Catholicos. It was learned that as of 1910, there were twelve organized parishes and eleven clergymen in the United States, out of whom only four were officially in charge of parishes. The Convention passed the following peculiar resolution pertaining to the election of a new Primate: "Although the election of a primate is desirable, considering the chaotic situation, we have decided to postpone it."[1]

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[1] Abahouni died in 1913, February 28th.

[2] "Gat'oghigosagan Gontagě," The Gotchnag, January 22, 1910, pp. 94-95.

[3] "Adenakrout'iwn Amerigayi Hayasdaneayts' Arak'elagan Sourp Egeghets'woy Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi," ("Minutes of the Assembly of the Delegates of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church of America"), The Gotchnag, March 26, 1910, pp. 299-301.

Upon the request of the Catholicos of Ēchmiadzin, the Patriarchate of Constantinople was invited to provide three names for the forthcoming election. The first list submitted contained the names of Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian, Archbishop Maghak'ia Dērounian, and Archbishop Moushegh Seropian. This list was not received favorably by the Catholicos.[2] A bid was made for a new list of nominees, this slate bearing the names of Reverend Knēl Kalēmkēarian, Bōghos Kaft'anian, and Arsēn Vehouni.[3]

This being the state of affairs, the Armenian Church of Our Saviour in Worcester was the first to disregard the claims of Father Kaft'anian to being the lawful Locum-Tenens of the Diocese. Bitter controversies plagued the parishes and feverish discussions became the rule of the day. The Worcester trustees made public their contention that they no longer regarded Father Kaft'anian as the Locum-Tenens. Their reasoning was based on the seventh article of the Constitution stating that whenever the office of Primate was vacant, the Central Executive Committee was to take the responsibility of designating a Locum-Tenens.[1] Hence, with the election of the former Primate, Archbishop Abahouni, Father Kaft'anian ceased to be Locum-Tenens of the Diocese. Reference to the Locum-Tenens was made in the letter of resignation submitted by Archbishop Abahouni to Father Kaft'anian, but this should not have given Father Kaft'anian false hopes for that office.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

[2] "Arhachnortagan Ěndreliner Amerigayi Hayerin Hamar" ("Nominees for the Primacy of the Armenians of America"), *Armenia*, April 9, 1910.

[3] "Amerigayi Hayerin Hamar Arhachnortagan Ěndreliner" ("Nominees for the Primacy of the Armenians in America"), *Armenia*, July 30, 1910.

On July 24, 1910, the Catholicos dispatched an encyclical addressed directly to the Diocesan Convention in Worcester. Enclosed were the lists of nominees for the election of Primate.[3] A news release dated December 24, 1910, informed Armenians of the sudden death of His Holiness Catholicos Madt'ēos Izmirliants'. This directly affected the Armenian Church in America. In this situation an official announcement by the Church Trustees of the Worcester Church made known the fact that a Diocesan Convention was to be convened on February 26, 1911, in Worcester to elect a new Primate.

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[1] *Sahamanatrout'iwn*, 1903, pp. 8-9.

[2] "Amerigahayots' Arhachnortagan Deghabah Arzhanabadiv Dēr Bōghos Vartabed Kaft'aniani Sdakhōs P'asdapan New York-i 'E. H'. T'ert'in," *Azk*, May 4, 1910, p. 3.

[3] "Hayer Hameriga," ("Armenians in America"), *Armenia*, September 24, 1910.

It was during this critical period that a bishop of high intellect and administrative ability appeared. He had come from the homeland as a visitor. His name was Archbishop Moushegh Seropian, the ex-Primate of Adana, Turkey, whose return to the homeland was forbidden by Turkish officials. Forthrightly he became an idol to those who were disenchanted with Father Kaft'anian. A struggle was to develop between these two churchmen as other factors intervened to further complicate the situation. Both sides were forced to fight bitterly for the rights they claimed and exposed themselves as opportunists to the faithful of the Church. To Father Kaft'anian, Archbishop Seropian appeared to be a nemesis.

D. Hope and Disillusionment: Bishop Moushegh Seropian

Born Ardashēs Seropian, in 1869 at Arslan Beg in Nicomidia, he was sent to the monastery of Armash in 1889. He was ordained in 1895, and served as Primate of Arapgir from 1897-1903. In 1904 he became Primate of Adana. The Catholicos of Cilicia elevated him to the episcopacy in 1906, officially receiving him into the jurisdiction of the Cilician Catholicate, a factor which was to become later an object of controversy.[1]

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[1] Antranig P'ōladian, Badmout'iwn Hayots' Arapgiri ("History of the Armenians of Arapgir"), (Baikar Press, Boston, 1969), pp. 460-465.

1. The Election of the Primate: Archbishop Seropian

During the Adana Massacre in Turkey in 1909, Archbishop Seropian had been visiting Egypt. He was notified by Turkish authorities not to return to his Diocese in Adana, as he was persona non grata. While in Egypt he received an invitation from the Armenians in Boston to become their preacher. He consulted with the Catholicos of Cilicia and the Patriarch of Constantinople, who advised him to wait somewhat longer pending the results of his case then before the Turkish authorities.[1]

Archbishop Seropian came to these shores in 1910. He was a well known clergyman with an inclination for intellectual pursuits, being the author of several books on ecclesiastical subjects. Soon after his arrival in the country, he became very dissatisfied and impatient with the dry and sterile thinking of the existing Armenian clergymen and repudiated them without distinction.

Archbishop Seropian was elected Primate of America on February 26, 1911, but he was forced to decline because no confirmation was forthcoming from Holy Ēchmiadzin; instead he was ordered to leave the United States immediately. This incident worsened relations between the Holy Sees of Ēchmiadzin and Cilicia. Nationwide resentment was voiced against

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[1] H. Haygouni, "Nor Egeghets'asērnerě" ("The New Church Zealots"), Azk, July 26, 1911, p. 2.

Holy Ēchmiadzin, since advocating breaking ties with the Holy See. Scandal was widespread in the Church until Ēchmiadzin intervened to restore peace and tranquility to the Armenian community, once again plagued with despair and uncertainty.

Archbishop Seropian came to New York on November 19, 1910, where he was welcomed with great enthusiasm and grandeur. He was an eloquent speaker and a dynamic preacher, thereby attracting multitudes to his celebrations of Divine Liturgy and lecture series.[1] While in New York he received an invitation to attend a function sponsored by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag Party), which he declined. This incident became the prelude for anti-Seropian propaganda. The periodical of the Tashnags, Hairenik, henceforth became the avant-guard of the critics of Archbishop Seropian. In his defense stood the Armenian newspaper, Azk.[2]

Thus another chapter of controversy erupted in the fold of the Armenian Church, forcing the young Diocese into further difficulties.

On July 24, 1910, Catholicos Izmirliants' dispatched his Encyclical for the convocation of a Diocesan Convention. It was addressed to the Central Executive Committee in Worcester.[3] However, the Convention was not convened until

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[1] Haygouni, "Nor Egeghets'asernerĕ," Azk, July 26, 1911, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 2.

[3] "Adenakroutin Amerigayi Hayasdaniatz Arhak'elagan Sourp Egeghetswoy Erespokhanagan Zhoghovi," Azk, March 29, 1911, p. 5.

February 26, 1911, after the death of the Catholicos. Father Kaft'anian presided over the Convention. The most important issue on the agenda was the election of the Primate. The nominees were Father Knēl Kalēmk'ēarian, Father Bōghos Kaft'anian, and Father Arsēn Vehouni. The results of this election were subject to Catholicossal confirmation. Father Kaft'anian requested that his name be withdrawn, thereby making possible the addition of Archbishop Seropian's name to the slate, by a vote of twenty-one to one. The results of the voting pointed to Archbishop Seropian as the victor, with sixteen votes in his favor, five for Father Kalēmk'earian, and three abstentions.[1]

The delegates agreed to give Archbishop Seropian a period of one month in which to decide about accepting the position of Primate. In the event of his refusal, it was agreed to invite Father Kalēmk'ēarian to assume the duties of the primacy.[2] The following day Father Kaft'anian, on behalf of the Diocesan Convention, wired Archbishop Seropian in Boston, "The Diocesan Convention of America has elected you as Primate. We send you our congratulations."[3] However, from a report appearing in Azk, it was learned that Archbishop Seropian declined the offer of the primacy, stating his reasons in a letter. It was also learned that the Church Trustees of Worcester pleaded with the Central Executive Committee not to accept Archbishop Seropian's refusal.[1] A similar appeal was made to Archbishop Seropian by the Church Trustees, pleading with him not to forsake the opportunity to come to the rescue of his immigrant community, thereby saving them from the threats of alienation and assimilation and possibly from extinction.[2]

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[1] "Haygagan Lourer" ("Armenian News"), Azk, February 29, 1911, p. 7.

[2] "Adenakrout'iwn Amerigayi Hayasdaneayts' Arhak'elagan Sourp Egeghets'woy Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi," ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church") The Gotchnag, April 1, 1911, pp. 307-309.

[3] "Amerigahay Arhachnortout'iwně" ("The Primacy of Armenians of America"), Azk, February 29, 1911, p. 7.

2. The Aftermath

Even before Archbishop Seropian's election, rumors were in circulation that he would never receive confirmation from Holy Ēchmiadzin. This assumption was based on the fact that Seropian was a member of the jurisdiction of the See of Cilicia and thus would not be allowed to serve in a Diocese under the jurisdiction of Ēchmiadzin. Before the official objection from Ēchmiadzin, certain events occurred which had a bearing on his reluctance to accept the post.

When the news of the resignation reached Father Kaft'anian, he notified the secretary of the Convention of the need for reporting to Ēchmiadzin the latest developments concerning the election and resignation of the Primate.

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[1] Ibid., April 19, 1911, p. 3.

[2] Ibid., April 26, 1911, p. 12.

Archbishop Seropian had already forwarded a copy of his resignation to the chairman, Dr. P'arhnag Atamian. In a letter dated April 12, 1911, to Father Kaft'anian, Dr. Atamian expressed the urgent need for an immediate meeting of the Central Executive Committee. Father Kaft'anian's reply was that Archbishop Seropian's letter of resignation would be submitted to the Central Executive Committee and that he would send Father Madt'eøs Mannigian, the pastor of Worcester, to represent him since he would not be able to attend personally.[1]

Father Mannigian accepted the news reluctantly, but scheduled the meeting for May 14 in Worcester. Due to a conflict by Father Kaft'anian's scheduling of a meeting for the Religious Council in New York on May 16, the Central Executive Committee meeting in Worcester was canceled.[2] A news release, May 18, 1911, reported that the Religious Council had concentrated its attention on the problems of clergymen who, upon coming to this country, needed to provide their official credentials and could perform their priestly duties only after being approved by the Diocese. The Religious Council found Bishop Seropian responsible for flare-ups and dissension within the Armenian communities. They charged

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[1] "Inch Gěsē ou Gěnē Kaft'anian Vartabed" ("What Father Kaft'anian Says and Does"), Azk, June 21, 1911, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 3.

Archbishop Seropian with defiance of ecclesiastical authority and took it upon themselves to notify him that he no longer was permitted to serve in the Diocese on the grounds that he belonged to the jurisdiction of Cilicia. Archbishop Seropian was reminded that his presence had caused enough disturbance and his secession was deemed desirable.[1]

The nine participating clergymen of the Religious Council cabled the Patriarch of Constantinople, pleading with him, "In the name of God, please remove Archbishop Seropian from America for he has become a scourge and meddler for the Armenians of America."[2] The Religious Council had made its position clear; the Central Executive Committee showed strong support for Archbishop Seropian. Two distinct and opposing camps were in evidence.

The Central Executive Committee met on June 14, 1911, in Boston to settle this problem. Father Kaft'anian did not attend. A debate centered around excerpts of Archbishop Seropian's letter of resignation which contained unflattering comments regarding the clergy of America. He wrote, "The Armenian clergy of America are fundamentally lacking in the calling of their spiritual vocation and in competency and moral responsibility."[1] Needless to say the clergy demanded that Archbishop Seropian retract his views. When the lay representatives ignored their demands, the priests angrily walked out. The Central Executive Committee continued its order of business. The members of the Central Executive Committee were firm in their conviction that Archbishop Seropian, a man of high stature and distinction, was indispensable as a Primate. Unanimous support was given to him and it was pledged to submit the matter to the supreme ecclesiastical authorities at Ēchmiadzin for consideration. Another decision resolved to terminate automatically the office of Locum-Tenens held by Father Kaft'anian since Bishop Seropian was elected Primate. Hence, until the confirmation of the present election and in keeping with Article 42 of the Constitution, the Council unanimously chose Bishop Seropian as the Locum-Tenens.[2]

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[1] "Bashdōnakir Amerigayi Hayeri Gronagan Zhoghovi" ("Official Letter of the Religious Council of the Armenians of America"), Armenia, June 7, 1911.

[2] Ibid.

Father Kaft'anian was informed of the decision of the Central Executive Committee and the two opposing camps confronted one another. The Religious Council received support from Ēchmiadzin and Constantinople in their condemnation of Archbishop Seropian. Once again the old feud between Ēchmiadzin and Cilicia was revived. The election of Archbishop

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[1] "Badaskhan Mě Kaft'anian Vartabedi" ("Reply to Father Kaft'anian"), *Azk*, May 31, 1911, p. 2.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean Zhoghovi" ("Minutes of the National Central Council"), *Azk*, June 14, 1911, p. 2.

Seropian was contested and the odds were strongly against him. An ominous air of skepticism surrounded him and his supporters.

3. Refusal of Confirmation by Holy Ēchmiadzin

Two official decrees issued in June, 1911, by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the See of Ēchmiadzin instructed the Diocese in America to take immediate measures to suspend Archbishop Seropian from all his ecclesiastical activities in the United States. In a letter to Father Kaft'anian, dated June 13, 1911, the Patriarch stated that Archbishop Seropian had departed for America with no official authorization from Turkey. He added that as a member of the jurisdiction of Cilicia, he had no right to hold any office outside the jurisdiction of the See of Cilicia. Another point mentioned was that only clergy with proper credentials were allowed to serve in the Diocese.[1]

On June 29, 1911, an official communique was received from the Locum-Tenens of Ēchmiadzin bearing the signature of Archbishop Kēork Sourēniantz. It supported the assertion that the activities of Archbishop Seropian in America had to be terminated. The order read as follows:

> Archbishop Moushegh may not officiate over Armenians in America either as a primate or as a Locum-Tenens. Be informed of this our decision, as well as that of

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[1] "Amerigayi Hayeri Arhachnortout'ean Khntirĕ" ("The Problem of the Primacy of Armenians of America"), Armenia, August 30, 1911.

> the Patriarchate of Constantinople. We urge that you notify Archbishop Seropian of its content.[1]

The refusal to grant confirmation to the election of Archbishop Seropian resulted in mixed feelings among the people. Those who were supporters of Archbishop Seropian felt a tide of resentment growing within them toward Ēchmiadzin, to such an extent that some advocated total separation from Ēchmiadzin and submission to Cilicia. A leading Armenian newspaper in Constantinople, the *Piwzantion*, sharply criticized both Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin, accusing the former of inciting agitation. It did not spare its criticism of the Deputy Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Sourēniantz, writing that by taking a direct stand against Bishop Seropian and by being an unwitting tool of the reactionaries, Archbishop Sourēniantz had convinced people that he did not have the competency to be the incumbent of the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin. The paper was also critical of Father Kaft'anian, whom it regarded as a disruptive force in the life of the church.

On August 5, 1911, a letter from the executive of the General Assembly of the Patriarch was forwarded to Bishop Vahram Mangouni, President of the Religious Council of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. The letter described in somber fashion the religious life of the Armenian community in America which had reached its lowest ebb. As evidence, he cited that on any given Sunday only twenty to thirty persons out of a potential of two thousand, attended church services.[1] The letter further charged Father Kaft'anian and his collaborators with upsetting the religious tranquility of parishes and perpetuating troubles within the Diocese. It spoke most sympathetically of Archbishop Seropian, stressing that a man of his stature would have been extremely useful in bringing law and order into the organizational life of the church and thus limiting the devious activities of some incorrigible clerics.[2] Furthermore, continued the writer of the letter, the authorities in Ēchmiadzin ought not to dwell too strongly upon the issue of Cilicia since the majority of Armenians in America had emigrated from provinces of Turkish-Armenia rather than regions of Caucasian Armenia. Sterness might only be interpreted as offensiveness by these immigrants.

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[1] *Ibid.*

At this point, a brief historical sketch concerning the relations of Ēchmiadzin and Cilicia is necessary for an understanding of the objections raised to the election of a Cilician Bishop in a Diocese under the jurisdiction of Ēchmiadzin.

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[1] Letter addressed to Dēr Vahram Srpazan Ebisgobos Mangouni, (Bishop Mangouni), August 5, 1911, Worcester, Mass., quoted in Azk, September 6, 1911, p. 4.

[2] Ibid.

4. Relations Between Ēchmiadzin and Cilicia: A Background

Since the fourth century the Mother See of Holy Ēchmiadzin has been the site of the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the Armenian Church. It was there that St. Gregory the Illuminator laid the foundation of the first Armenian Church structure in 301 A.D. For political and military reasons, the Pontifical See was occasionally displaced geographically, only to return to its traditional site.[1] In 1441 Armenian Church monastics (Arewelian Vartabedner) from the monasteries in the Eastern provinces of Armenia pressed to have the Catholicossal See removed from Cilicia to Holy Ēchmiadzin. The Cilician clergy opposed the Eastern Armenians. An assembly which met in 1441 in Ēchmiadzin elected Giragos Virabets'i as Catholicos of All Armenians.[2] The Catholicos who remained in Cilicia was Krikor Mousapēgian (1439-1451?); he subsequently became the founder of the See of Cilicia.

From that day hence the relationship between these two Holy Sees has been a teetering one, with peace often giving way to bitter quarreling, antagonism, and even schism. Two incidents are worth noting. The first occurred in the seventeenth century when the Bishop of Ancyra took his ordination at the hands of the Catholicos of Cilicia. This incident gave reason for the Catholicoi on both sides to resort to mutual condemnation and repudiation. Finally, a meeting in Jerusalem in 1652 was held between the two Catholicoi, P'ilibbos of Ēchmiadzin and Nersēs of Cilicia, to iron out their differences. It was agreed that neither Catholicos would be allowed to consecrate a bishop for a Diocese outside his jurisdiction.[1]

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[1] Papkēn Giwlēsērian, Badmout'iwn Gat'oghigosats' Giligioy ("History of the Catholicoi of Cilicia") (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicate of Cilicia, 1939), pp. 5-7; Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, At'orh Hayasdaneayts' ("The See of Armenia") (Vagharshabad, Armenia; Ēchmiadzin Printing Press, 1886), p. 1.

[2] Giwlēsērian, Badmout'iwn Gat'oghigosats' Giligioy, p. 8.

The second conflict took place in the nineteenth century between Catholicos Kēork IV (1866-1882) of Ēchmiadzin and Mgrdich' I K'ēfsizian (1871-1894) of Cilicia. The Catholicos of Cilicia challenged the authority of the Catholicos of All Armenians and pursued a secessionist policy.[2] Their differences stemmed more from personal ambitions than from religious matters. Each declared the other a schismatic. The antagonism between the two Holy Sees finally came to an end during the incumbencies of Mgrdich' I Khrimian (1892-1907), Catholicos of Ēchmiadzin, and Sahag II Khabaian (1903-1939), Catholicos of Cilicia. A telegram of reconciliation was sent by Catholicos Khrimian to Catholicos Sahag upon the latter's election as Catholicos of Cilicia. Thus a spirit of love, peace, and harmony came to prevail in the relationship of the two Catholicoi.[1]

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[1] Giwlēsērian, Badmout'iwn Gat'oghigosats' Giligioy, p. 348.

[2] Ibid., p. 729.

The position that Ēchmiadzin took in Archbishop Seropian's case was clear. It was feared that the old feud between Cilicia and Ēchmiadzin would erupt once more, thereby causing more difficulties. This Ēchmiadzin wished to avoid. However, the attitude of the Catholicos of Cilicia was one of ambiguity and speculation.

5. The Deepening of the Controversy

The Central Executive Committee of the Diocese sent a letter dated June 16, 1911, to Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia requesting that Archbishop Seropian be permitted to remain in the United States for the spiritual benefit of the Armenians. The answer received from Cilicia was most favorable. Therein the Catholicos included a copy of another letter addressed to the Deputy Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Sourēniantz in Ēchmiadzin.[2] In his letter the Catholicos explained the situation in America and requested the cooperation of the Locum-Tenens in finalizing the confirmation of Archbishop

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[1] The Catholicossate of Cilicia (Antelias, Lebanon: Official Publication of the Catholicossate, n.d.), pp. 11-12; Giligets' i (pseud.), "Ēchmiadzin and Giligia," Azk, November 4, 1911, p. 2.

[2] "Namag Giligioy Gat'oghigosēn," ("Letter from the Catholicos of Cilicia"), The Gotchnag, September 9, 1911, p. 879.

Seropian as Primate.[1] Both this letter and the mediatory efforts of Catholicos Sahag were interpreted as acts of offense and ambition designed to extend the jurisdiction of the See of Cilicia at the expense of the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin. This was also the feeling of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Thus, both Ēchmiadzin and Constantinople combined their efforts against the Cilician Catholicos.[2]

The supporters of Bishop Seropian claimed unfair treatment and expressed their disgust with both the Constantinople Patriarchate and Ēchmiadzin. They threatened the ecclesiastical centers with actions of dissension and schism. A weekly magazine, *K'aghak'ats'i* (*Citizen*), published in California, became the staunch advocate of revolution against the Mother See. It even questioned the validity of the jurisdiction that Ēchmiadzin enjoyed over the Armenians of America. A periodical, *Kaghakats'i* propagated the following:

> Until now it had not occurred to anyone to oppose Echmiadzin. But if the Mother See continues to obstinately trod upon the will of the people, then our only alternative is to insist upon organizing a Diocese under the jurisdiction of Cilicia, composed of residents of several western states.[3]

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[1] Letter of His Holiness, the Catholicos of Cilicia, forwarded to Echmiadzin, July 17, 1911, quoted in *Azk*, September 6, 1911.

[2] "Sisi Gat'oghigosin Kirn ew Amenayn Hayots' Hayrabede" ("The Letter of the Catholicos of Sis and the Catholicos of All Armenians"), *The Gotchnag*, May 18, 1912, p. 486.

[3] K'aghak'ats'i (pseud.) "Kaghakats'iin Gardzik'nerě", ("Thoughts of the Citizen"), *Azk*, October 4, 1911, p. 5.

Once the word about dissension became widespread among the people, others joined in, both individually and in groups. At an earlier time the Central Executive Committee had cautioned Ēchmiadzin not to antagonize that element of Armenian immigrants who had come from different regions of Cilicia and who by tradition had lived within the jurisdiction of the Cilician See. These people generally had a genuine warmth and respect for Archbishop Seropian.[1]

On November 23, 1911, a petition was presented to Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia by the Cilician Armenians of America declaring their intention to be separated from Ēchmiadzin and to create a Diocese under the jurisdiction of Cilicia.[2] Catholicos Sahag quickly responded to the appeal of these Armenians, exhorting them to be more patient and calm and not to allow trivialities to upset and mar their faith, against which even the swords of tyrants had proved helpless. At the same time, however, the Catholicos lashed out strongly against the Locum-Tenens of Ēchmiadzin and Constantinople, condemning their actions as vindictive. He made an appeal for the cause of unity so that Armenians, as an undivided entity, could preserve their existence in the fold of the Armenian Church, as "One flock and one Shepherd."[1]

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[1] Letter addressed to Bishop Vahram Mangouni by the Central Executive Committee, August 5, 1911, Worcester, Mass., quoted in Azk, September 6, 1911, p. 4.

[2] Sisi Gat'oghigosi T'ought'ě Amerigahay Giligets'inerin" ("The Letter of the Catholicos of Sis to the Armenian Cilicians of America"), Armenia, May 8, 1912.

With the passage of time, the long and bitter conflicts following the election of Bishop Seropian lost their vigor and the blame and censure against Ēchmiadzin subsided, only to be revived intermittently by malcontents.

E. Decline of the Diocese

Because Holy Ēchmiadzin showed reluctance in approving the election of Archbishop Seropian, the life of the Diocese took a turn for the worse. Bitter controversies, public contempt, rivalries among both laymen and clerics, and sacrilege became the order of the day. The Church became the battlefield for the quarrels of Armenian factions. The political organizations attempted, by every means possible, to discredit the churchmen who did not favor them.[2] The clerics, in turn, acted irresponsibly and in a manner unbecoming their profession, through their vituperations and gossip-mongering, thereby triggering the politicians to anger.

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[1] Catholicos Sahag Khabaian, "Amerigahay Giligets'inerou" ("To the Cilician Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, February 10, 1912, p. 151.

[2] Knch'ouni, "Namag Amerigayi Miats'eal Nahanknerēn" ("Letter from the United States of America"), Armenia, October 10, 1912.

1. Catholicossal Election and the American Delegation

Meanwhile, the Catholicossal election was scheduled to take place at Ēchmiadzin on December 24, 1911. For the first time the American Diocese was invited to participate in a Catholicossal election, an honor not to be taken lightly for a Diocese that had not yet exercised its right to vote in an assembly involving all Armenians. Much tension and anxiety surrounded this matter also.

A communique dated September 27, 1911, from the Synod of Holy Ēchmiadzin was forwarded to Father Kaft'anian officially announcing the forthcoming election to be held on December 24 in Ēchmiadzin. The communique instructed Father Kaft'anian to designate a lay representative to accompany him to the assembly in Ēchmiadzin. The note added that necessary petitions had already been filed for visas and had been forwarded to the Russian Embassy in Washington. All that was needed was the election of the lay delegate and instructions were included concerning this.[1]

The Catholicossal elections served to set the scene for more turbulance, so characteristic of this period. In Armenia support was strong for Archbishop Eghishē Tourian, the former Patriarch of Constantinople, a scholarly man, the favorite of the Tashnag Party. A second candidate was another former Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Maghak'ia Ōrmanian, a church historian and theologian and an adversary of the Tashnag Party. The third aspirant was Bishop Garabed Dēr Mgrdich'ian, a churchman schooled in Berlin. These three ecclesiasts had their supporters and antagonists in the United States as well as the homeland. However, the controversy in America revolved more around the nomination of the lay delegates rather than these churchmen.

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[1] "Ěndrout'ean Bashdōnakrer" ("Official Notices Concerning Election"), The Gotchnag, November 11, 1911, pp. 1089-1091. M.H. Ananigian, "Gatoghigosagan Ěndrout'iwnǒ" ("Catholicossal Election"), The Gotchnag, September 2, 1911, pp. 839-843.

Father Kaft'anian, the Locum-Tenens, was bitterly opposed by his adversaries who accused him of collaborating with the Tashnag Party, whose ideology and opportunistic practices were diametrically opposed to religion and the church.[1] To counteract Father Kaft'anian, the Central Executive Committee convened an extraordinary convention to elect the lay delegate who would represent the American Diocese. The meeting took place on November 12, 1911, in Worcester, and was presided over by Father Bōghos Shahnazarian, pastor of the Holy Cross Church in West Hoboken. The Convention contended that Father Kaft'anian could not represent the American Diocese in Ēchmiadzin because he did not hold an official position in the Church. Thus they declared Father Kaft'anian to have no relation whatsoever with the Diocese and went even further in depriving him of having any ties with the Armenians in America. The Convention then elected Father Shahnazarian as the Locum-Tenens of the Diocese. It was also decided that the Locum-Tenens of Holy Ēchmiadzin would cast the vote in behalf of the Diocese at the election convention and that Maghak' K. Bērbērian would be the official lay delegate.[1] The issue became further complicated when Bērbērian was denied participation at the convention in Ēchmiadzin because his credentials were unsatisfactory. B. H. Ambrougian, who was elected lay delegate at a separate convention held in Providence at the same time, under the Locum-Tenency of Father Kaft'anian, was given the right to participate in the assembly meeting. The Assembly in Ēchmiadzin failed to be sensitive to the demands of Maghak' Bērbērian to unseat Ambrougian. The reason provided by Ēchmiadzin for their reluctance to be sympathetic with Bērbērian was that the meeting that elected him as delegate was not presided over by Father Kaft'anian, the Locum-Tenens. On the other hand, Bērbērian's argument was based on the fact that from November 2, 1911, on, Father Kaft'anian had not been in charge of any parish and according to the twenty-fifth article of the Constitution, could not possibly preside over the Convention.[1]

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[1] "Gat'oghigosagan Ē̌ndrout'iwnn ou Amerigahayerē̆," ("The Catholicossal Election and the Armenians of America"), Azk, November 15, 1911, p. 2.

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[1] "Amerigahay Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově," ("The Assembly of Representatives of Armenians of America"), Azk, November 15, 1911, p. 2.

On December 13, 1911, the Assembly in Ēchmianzin elected Archbishop Kēork Sourēniantz the Catholicos of All Armenians.[2] The nature of the Diocese in America, being what it was, was to bring about more turmoil before relative calm prevailed. Armenian immigrants once again looked toward the East with hopes and expectations of finding a solution for matters in America.

2. Decay of Clerical Standards

The Church had now reached an intolerable state of chaos. Many clergymen, all from the old country, represented the Church in an unfavorable image. These men were often malcontents and sought the priesthood merely for purposes of security and material gain.[3] Lack of education was another factor contributing to their ineffectiveness. They often shared equal blame with the political leaders of the day for the scandalous events in both church and community and in threatening to undermine the authority of the primacy.

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[1] "Amerigayi Badkamwori Boghok'ě Ēchmiadzin Sourp Sinodin" ("The Protest of the American Delegate to the Holy Synod of Ēchmiadzin"), Azk, January 24, 1912, p. 5 ; "Azkayin Lourer" ("National News"), The Gotchnag, January 27, 1912, p. 104.

[2] "D.D. Kēork Ark'ebisgobos Sourēnian Hayrabed Amenayn Hayots'" ("His Holiness Kēork Sourēnian Catholicos of All Armenians"), The Gotchnag, January 13, 1912, p. 56.

[3] "Badaskhan Mě" Kaft'anian Vartabedi" ("Reply to Father Kaft'anian"), Azk, May 31, 1911, p. 2.

Clerical rivalry and a gross lack of hierarchical discipline contributed to the virtual anarchy within the Church.[1]

It was not uncommon to hear that a priest or Parish Council had been summoned to court to settle differences. This was viewed with dismay by the Armenian communities. One such incident involved the Armenian Church of Our Saviour of Worcester, against whom Father Kaft'anian brought charges. He claimed that the deeds and properties of the Church legally belonged to him.[2] This was typical of other such situations existing throughout the communities of America. Divided loyalties, doubts, conflicts, and intrigues were compounded by political interests.[3] Efforts for unity were suggested and considered. The conflicts subsided temporarily with the arrival of the Plenipotentiary whose mission was to bring about harmony and discipline.

F. The Plenipotentiary Delegate of Holy Ēchmiadzin: Archbishop Kēork Iwt'iwjian (1913)

Holy Ēchmiadzin had been kept informed of the gradual decline of the organizational structure and religious life of the Diocese and the Armenian immigrants by numerous individuals and official bodies. These suggested that the Holy See intervene to restore peace and order for the welfare of the Diocese in the United States. The Catholicos, shortly after his election, took action and directed the Primate of Europe, Bishop Kēork Iwt'iwjian, to embark for America as the Plenipotentiary Delegate of Holy Ēchmiadzin.

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[1] Hay Egeghets'asēr (pseud.), "Amerigahay Egeghats'agan Khntirner" ("Church Problems of Armenians of America"), Azk, May 22, 1912, p. 1.

[2] "Oust'ri Hay Egeghets'agan Kordzer" ("The Armenian Church Affairs of Worcester"), The Gotchnag, June 22, 1912, pp. 606-607.

[3] "Amerigahay Khntirner" ("Armenian-American Problems"), Azk, December 6, 1911, p. 2.

Upon his arrival, the Plenipotentiary opened negotiations. He encountered difficulties but tried always to maintain clear understanding and firmness mixed with diplomacy.

1. Call to a Mission

For health reasons, Bishop Iwt'iwjian's doctors were not in favor of his undertaking the journey to America.[1] Ten months lapsed from the time of his appointment until he was granted permission to proceed with his plans for the journey. A telegram was sent from Ēchmiadzin to Father Arsēn Vehouni in Worcester which read:

> Soon Bishop Iwt'iwjian, the Primate of Europe, will arrive in America as the Plenipotentiary delegate. Father Kaft'anian and Bishop Moushegh Seropian have been dismissed. Please advise the people to be calm and not to make other arrangements.[2]

This telegram was sent by the Central Executive Committee to the editor of The Gotchnag as a news release with an attached note adding that Bishop Seropian had already declined his election.

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[1] "Ameriga Hayeri Egeghets'agan Kordzerě" ("The Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Armenians of America"), Armenia, July 31, 1912.

[2] Telegram addressed to Vehouni, Hayots' Egeghets'o Ousdr (Vehouni, Armenian Church, Worcester), July 23, 1912, quoted in The Gotchnag, August 10, 1972, pp. 774-775.

The minutes of the Central Executive Committee of July 25, 1912 mention that Father Kaft'anian, per order of the Catholicos, had been relieved from his duties as Locum-Tenens. No mention is made of Bishop Seropian.[1] This ommission appears to have been deliberate, especially since Bishop Seropian was the chairman of the Central Council over which he presided. In the ensuing months the Central Executive Committee communicated with both the Catholicos and Bishop Iwt'iwjian concerning the latter's mission.

It was confirmed that Bishop Iwt'iwjian would reside in Worcester. The Council appealed to the Catholicos to review the reports sent to him for his selection of the best-qualified candidate for the Primacy of America.[2] In a letter dated May 2, 1913, Bishop Iwt'iwjian informed the Council of his choice of Father Vehouni as his vicar to oversee matters in the Diocese until his arrival.[3]

Bishop Iwt'iwjian was welcomed by representatives of various Parish Councils in West Hoboken on August 6, 1913.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Minutes of the Central Council"), July 25, 1913, Worcester, Mass., p. 23.

[2] Ibid., May 2, 1913, p. 28.

[3] Ibid., May 21, 1913, p. 30.

He was ushered to the Holy Cross Church where the faithful greeted him enthusiastically and in turn received his blessings.[1]

2. Negotiations and Elections

On August 18, 1913, Bishop Iwt'iwjian as Plenipotentiary Delegate presided over the meeting in Worcester of the Central Executive Committee. During the course of the meeting he revealed the existence of several letters sent by Father Kaft'anian to the Catholicos at Holy Ēchmiadzin wherein serious allegations were made against the activities of the Central Executive Committee, claiming they had not remained impartial in the controversy and that Bishop Seropian was responsible for agitation in the Church.[2] The Council vehemently challenged these accusations. Father Kaft'anian was invited to a meeting on August 22 in order to restate his charges personally.[3] Before adjourning the Central Executive Committee submitted its unanimous resignation. This move was made to allow the Bishop a free hand in conducting private negotiations with interested parties and bodies. The

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[1] "Hay Kaght'aganout'iwnĕ" ("Armenian Immigration"), The Gotchnag, August 16, 1913, p. 802.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn Getřonagan Varch'out'ean," August 18, 1913, Worcester, Mass., p. 34.

[3] Father Kaft'anian made no effort to attend the meeting. Instead he wrote a letter to Bishop Iwt'iwjian, repeating his charges in a most harsh manner. It was only then that the Bishop became convinced of the ambiguity of Father Kaft'anian's claims and announced that Kaft'anian's case was closed permanently.

Bishop refused to accept the resignation of the Committee and requested that they remain in office until the convocation of a new Convention scheduled for September 20 and 21, 1913, in the Church of Our Saviour.[1]

Bishop Iwt'iwjian approved the validity of the Diocesan Convention which had been held on November 12, 1911, and which had elected the controversial Cilician Bishop Seropian. His decision was strongly objected to by the Trustees of the New York Church and thereafter by the trustees of other churches. A series of "open letters" addressed to Bishop Iwt'iwjian appeared in various newspapers, in which the writers expressed their deep concern and noncompliance with the decisions of the Bishop. Some went so far as to question his judgment.[2] The Parish Council of New York bluntly rejected the invitation of the Bishop to attend the Convention scheduled for September 20-21. They charged Iwt'iwjian with being influenced by certain groups and individuals and showing bias in matters by extending his patronage to the usurpers and troublemakers.[3]

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[1] "Amerigayi Hay Zhoghovourtin" ("To the Armenian People of America"), The Gotchnag, September 6, 1913, pp. 873-874. Also "Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean," August 18, 1913, p. 35.

[2] Parish Council of New York, "Pats' Namagner" ("Open Letters"), The Gotchnag, September 20, 1913, pp. 918-919. Also, M.H. Ananigian, "Pats' Namagner," The Gotchnag, September 20, 1913, p. 919.

[3] Ibid., p. 918.

In a proclamation of September 11, 1913, Bishop Iwt'iwjian took issue with his critics, especially the Church Trustees of New York.[1] He charged the trustees with misconduct, arrogance, overtly inciting unrest, and violation of the Constitution. Bishop Iwt'iwjian resolved to suspend the trustees of New York on the grounds of rebellion, in violation of the twelfth article of the Constitution. He assigned the trustees of West Hoboken to tend to the religious affairs of New York until further notice from the Diocesan Convention.[2]

The Bishop presided at a clergymen's conference on September 19, 1913. The clerics were asked to submit credentials of their ordination and official licenses which allowed them to work in the Diocese of America. Those who were unable to attend were asked to mail in their documents, or suffer serious penalties.[3]

At the Diocesan Convention held on September 20, 1913, twenty-two clergy and lay delegates participated. On September 21, by a sixteen vote margin, Father Vehouni was elected as the new Primate of America.[4]

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[1] Kēork Iwt'iwjian, "Bashdōnagan" ("Official Proclamation"), The Gotchnag, September 27, 1913, pp. 942-943.

[2] Ibid., p. 943. Also "Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean," August 18, 1913, p. 35; August 29, 1913, p. 37.

[3] "Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean," August 18, 1913, p. 35.

[4] "Amerigahayeri Egethets'agan Kordzerě" ("The Ecclesiastical Affairs of Armenians in America"), Armenia, October 15, 1913.

His mission accomplished, Bishop Iwt'iwjian departed for Manchester, England, on October 15, 1913.[1] The public reaction and appraisal of the work of the Catholicossal Legate was mixed. Some considered the mission a triumph while others criticized his methods.[2] The new Primate inherited the burden of problems of the Church. He took office amid well-wishes and unfriendly shouts. The road ahead was to prove difficult, not only for the Primate, but for all the Armenians in the world who were to feel the effects of the horrible tragedy of 1915. Seropian was subsequently assigned as Bishop of Baghdad, while Kaft'anian was eventually defrocked.

G. Expansion of Churches

Despite the trying years which the Armenian Diocese experienced during the period from 1906-1913, and despite the air of uncertainty which gripped the Armenian communities, three churches were built and consecrated. Curiously enough, this building of churches involved the Armenian communities of the West Coast more so than the East. Most likely this was due to the migration of Armenians westward across the United States and to the presence of Archbishop Sarajian in California.

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[1] "Ewrobayi Arhachnortin Amerigaēn Veratartzĕ ("The Return of the Primate of Europe from America"), *Armenia*, December 14, 1913.

[2] M. H. Ananigian, "Arhachnortagen Endrout'iwnĕ" ("The Election of the Primate"), *The Gotchnag*, October 4, 1913, pp. 953-954.

1. Holy Cross Church, Union City, New Jersey

Early Armenian immigrants arrived as early as 1880 from Diarbekir, Turkey, at what was then known as West Hoboken, New Jersey.[1] The region of Diarbekir was known for its expert silkworm cultivators and silkweavers. The Armenian immigrants who came to seek their fortunes in America were usually attracted by the silkweaving industry in Jersey City and West Hoboken. They found employment in the Gibbernard and Schwantzenbach silk mills in these two cities.

Life for these immigrant Armenians was difficult as they struggled with only the meager wages they earned from the mills. Prominent among these early settlers in Jersey City was Haigag Ēginian who was the first to emigrate to that city in 1881. In 1888 he founded the first Armenian language paper in America called the *Arekag* ("The Sun"), thereby earning the title of "The Father of Armenian Periodicals".[2] Another immigrant, T'ovmas Ch'arshafjian, followed in the footsteps of Ēginian. He settled in West Hoboken, where in May, 1899, he began publication of the *Hairenik Weekly*, later to become the official organ of the Tashnag Party.[3]

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[1] In 1925 the townships of West Hoboken and Union Hall were consolidated into the city of Union City.

[2] Diran, "Amerigahay Mamoulě," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, pp. 127-129.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

The paper was strongly anti-religious in its editorial policies and encouraged the building of Armenian Centers rather than Armenian Churches.[1]

In the spring of 1899 Archbishop Sarajian made a pastoral visitation to West Hoboken and arranged for Father Vahram Msrlian to celebrate Divine Liturgy in a local Protestant Church. This was the first Armenian Mass to be celebrated in New Jersey.[2] Since the beginning of 1899 a seven-member Board of Church Trustees had been at work under the chairmanship of Armenag Shishmanian reviewing possibilities for the building of a church in that community.

On April 12, 1899, a meeting was held at Shishmanian's house to discuss plans for a church.[3] Archbishop Sarajian was present at this gathering and urged that a modest church building be constructed to suit the needs of the community. There were those, under the leadership of an influential Armenian, Hovsēp' Sarafian, who preferred the construction of a multi-complex structure housing a church, school, dormitories, and other facilities, to be located on two hundred acres of land. After much deliberation this founding group supported Archbishop Sarajian's plans.[1]

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[1] Editorial, "Vdankě," ("The Danger"), Hairenik, August 3, 1901.

[2] Fiftieth Anniversary, Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church, Union City, New Jersey, January 27, 1957, p. 12.

[3] "Certificate of Change of the Name of the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Church of New Jersey," December 11, 1905, p. 1. (Typewritten copy).

On September 15, 1899, a group of representatives from the Armenian community entered a plea with the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Hudson to form officially the "Armenian Church of New Jersey."[2] Consequently, Archbishop Sarajian was invited again to the community in November, 1899, to elucidate the people on the building of a church. He emphasized that he did not favor any plans that called for a recreation hall in the basement of the Church.[3] The Archbishop's position on this particular issue was met with protest by the Tashnag audience led by T'ovmas Ch'arshafjian. He urged the people to discard the Primate's plans, but instead to build a hall to be used for an Armenian language school and social gatherings. Ch'arshafjian added that a small room could be set aside as a place of worship. The discussion and arguments intensified to such an extent that Archbishop Sarajian left the meeting.[4]

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[1] Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch, pp. 13-14.

[2] "Certificate of Change," December 11, 1905, p. 1.

[3] A series of incidents following the building of the Worcester Church prompted the Archbishop's firm stand. The hall of the Church had been used by various political organizations and their behavior had been less than proper.

[4] Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch, p. 15.

Another attempt to resolve the issue of the building of a church was held on March 15, 1900.[1] Once again rival groups conflicted in their preferences for a social center or a church building.

In 1903 the Church Trustees purchased a lot on the northern corner of Angelique Street and Clinton Avenue (now 27th Street and New York Avenue, respectively), for $1900.[2] Fund raising activities ensued in which Archbishop Sarajian played a prominent role, raising $5000 single-handedly, $3000 of which was contributed by three New York Armenian philanthropists, Giwlbēngian, Karagēōzian, and T'awshanjian.[3]

On December 9, 1905, the Board of Church Trustees applied to the Court of Common Pleas of Hudson County of the State of New Jersey to change the name of the Church from "Armenian Church of New Jersey" to "Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church."[4] On September 16, 1906, groundbreaking ceremonies were held and the Church was consecrated on January 27, 1907, by Archbishop Sarajian. It was named the Holy Cross Church.[5] Archbishop Sarajian became pastor of the

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[1] "T'ghtagts'out'iwnner," ("Reports"), Tzain Haireniatz, March 31, 1900.

[2] Mgount, Hay Gghern Amerigayi Mēch, p. 15.

[3] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, p. 253.

[4] "Certificate of Change," December 11, 1905, p. 4.

[5] Fiftieth Anniversary, January 27, 1957, p. 14; Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, p. 254.

Church until 1908, when disputes with the Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party prompted his move to California.[1]

As the Armenian community increased in size, plans for a church center got underway. The two World Wars and the Great Depression, however, intervened and consequently the parish center was not realized. In the spring of 1952 Khorēn Shahbazian, a North Bergen manufacturer, purchased the Old City Theater on 27th Street and Bergenline Avenue, which was converted into a social center and dedicated on December 14, 1952.[2]

2. Saint Gregory Church, Fowler, California

Armenian immigrants settled in Fowler in the county of Fresno in the 1890s, attracted by the fruit farming and vineyards.[3] Many came from the Armenian community of Fresno. By the 1900s intense interest grew in all phases of Armenian community activities and strong feelings were expressed for an Armenian Church.

The building of the church was completed in the early months of 1910 and was consecrated on April 17, 1910, by Archbishop Sarajian, who named it Saint Gregory Church.[4]

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[1] Mgount, p. 18.

[2] Fiftieth Anniversary, January 27, 1957, p. 16.

[3] Moushegh Seropian, "Kalifornioy Kaghout'ĕ," ("The Community of California"), Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ, 1912, p. 70.

[4] Ibid.

Archbishop Sarajian had been serving the parish since his resignation from West Hoboken in 1908. On June 12, 1910, a meeting of the parish was held in which it was resolved to have the Church incorporated.[1] On July 14, 1910, the Board of Church Trustees applied to the Court of Pleas of the County of Fresno of the State of California to have the Church named "Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Fowler".[2]

In 1911 Archbishop Sarajian retired from his pastorate and departed for Van, Turkey. No permanent pastor was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Archbishop Sarajian.

In 1914 the Armenians in Fowler became divided over the status of a defrocked clergyman, Ghewont Martougēsian.[3] One segment of the Armenian community expressed their disapproval of Martougēsian's performance of priestly duties and informed the Diocese of their objections. The Church Trustees of Fowler were requested by the Diocese to discourage Martougēsian from administering sacraments to the faithful and from use of the pulpit. The Trustees, however, did not heed the exhortations of the Diocese and a rift between the two occurred. As the situation deteriorated, both parties appealed to the Courts to intervene. The situation was alleviated when Martougēsian agreed to comply with the wishes of the Primate, pending decision of the Pontiff in Ēchmiadzin. No further details are available concerning this episode.[1]

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[1] "Certificate of Incorporation," Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, Fowler, California, July 14, 1910, p. 1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The discussion of this entire episode can be found in Chapter VI of this dissertation.

3. Saint Mary Church, Yettem, California

At the turn of the twentieth century the Armenian community in California was predominantly settled in and around Fresno. Forced by economic considerations, however, an Armenian Committee was formed in Fresno in 1900 to investigate the possibilities of acquiring land within a forty to fifty mile radius of Fresno for the establishment of new Armenian settlements.[2] Unfortunately the activities of this committee were discontinued because of personality conflicts and disunity among its members.[3]

Through the efforts of an Armenian immigrant, Kapriēl Baghdōyian from Malatia, Turkey, an Armenian settlement was established in 1901 on forty acres of land forty-two miles southeast of Fresno. The place was properly known as Lowell, but due to the predominantly Armenian population, and by special permission from the Federal Government in Washington and the local Chamber of Commerce, the area was renamed _Yettem_ (Paradise). By 1912 the community included some three-hundred Armenians.[1]

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[1] A more detailed presentation of Saint Gregory Parish in Fowler cannot be presented here because of the lack of source materials available on the subject.

[2] Seropian, "Kalifornioy Kaghout'ĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1912, p. 70.

[3] No details are available concerning the nature of these conflicts.

[4] Vahan K. Giwldalian, "Kaghout'i Mĕ Badmout'iwnĕ" ("The Story of a Community"), *Amerigahay Hanrakidag Darekirk'* ("Armenian-American Almanac") (Boston: Hairenik Press, 1924), p. 445.

The chief occupation of the residents of Yettem was farming and fruit and vegetable growing. The preservation and observance of ethnic customs and habits of the homeland make this Armenian community unique among all others in the United States.

No details are available concerning the religious life of the community other than that Saint Mary Church was built in 1911 at a cost of $3000. It was consecrated by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian on July 6, 1911. In 1947 the Church underwent a complete renovation.

H. Summary and Conclusion

The central theme of this chapter was a lengthy leadership crisis which further contributed to the burdens of a church already laden with seemingly insoluble problems. Father Kaft'anian, a convert from Roman Catholicism, became Locum Tenens for two years, during which time the factional struggle reached a new high, culminating in the assassination of a wealthy Armenian. The implication of another priest as an accomplice in the killing, no less than the general turmoil, represented a challenge that was beyond the abilities of Father Kaft'anian.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 446.

Nor was the leadership crisis resolved with the election of a new Primate in 1908; indeed, the one month tenure of Archbishop Abahouni threw the community into an even deeper turmoil. It seems that this aged cleric found himself unequal to the impossible task which confronted him in America. Once again Father Kaft'anian took over as Locum Tenens; but the legitimacy of this act was immediately challenged, thereby continuing the leadership crisis of the church.

While Kaft'anian's candidacy was in limbo, Bishop Seropian came to the United States in 1910 as a refugee from Turkey. Both in terms of intellect and personality, Bishop Seropian was an attractive choice for the Prelacy to which he was elected in 1911. However, as a member of the Cilician Catholicate, he could not serve in a Diocese attached to the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin without the Pontiff's approval, which was summarily withheld. Because of the Bishop's popularity there was a revulsion against the Holy See and hence another crisis at the leadership level which eventually led to a decline of organizational and religious life in the diocese.

It was not until 1913 that the Holy See dispatched Bishop Iwt'iwjian as Plenipotentiary Delegate to pacify the Armenian flock in America. While his peacemaking mission was only partly fruitful, Bishop Iwt'iwjian did succeed in bringing about the election of a new Primate, Father Vehouni. This outcome represented a temporary resolution of the leadership crisis which would once again engulf the Church hierarchy after the fateful years of the Great War.

CHAPTER VI

NATIONALISM VS. THE PRIMACY (1913-1917)

It was hoped that many of the problems of the church would be alleviated with the election of Father Arsēn Vehouni of Worcester as the Primate. Father Vehouni initiated his work as Primate by attempting to unite the Armenian community and to reorganize the Diocese into a more efficient structure. In the midst of clergy problems and uncertain public opinion, Father Vehouni attempted to create a new diocesan image. His election was received with mixed feelings by the people.

The period of Father Vehouni's primacy was highly volatile, erupting during the First World War. While the world-at-large was in bitter conflict, the Turkish plan of genocide was decreed and executed on April 24-25, 1915,by the Turkish dictators Talaat Bey and Enver Pasha. The plan claimed the lives of almost two million Armenians. World and Armenian reaction was immediate. Many of these Armenian immigrants sought refuge in the United States.

Hardly had the first bright rays of reconstruction shown, than the Primate was again plunged into bitter feuds and dissension among his co-workers, people and political parties alike. The foremost issue confronting Father Vehouni was his alleged lack of cooperation with the Armenian National Defense Union, an organization comprised of the Armenian

Church, the Evangelical Armenian Union, three Armenian political parties, and the Armenian General Benevolent Union. During a period of intense persecution in the Armenian provinces, the members of the Armenian National Defense Union, whose activities were directed toward the relief of the Armenians in the homeland, became disillusioned with Father Vehouni's stand as Primate. As a result of their differences, Father Vehouni withdrew the Diocese from the Union, an act which was to mark his downfall.

Thus the Diocese, once again upset by feuding and quarreling, was plunged into schism, lasting until 1921.

A. A New Primate: Father Arsēn Vehouni (1913-1917)

A Catholicossal encyclical of November 2, 1913, confirmed the election of Father Arsēn Vehouni as the third Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. Born in Scutari, near Istanbul, Turkey, he was the son of the presbyter of The Holy Cross Church.[1] He was ordained a celibate priest at the hand of Archbishop Souk'ias Barziants'. He resided temporarily in the monastery of Ēchmiadzin from whence he was assigned to serve in Rumania and Bulgaria. In 1901 he came to America where he was assigned as the pastor of the Lawrence, Massachusetts parish. From 1901 to 1904 he served as pastor of the Providence parish. On February 1,

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[1] Date of birth and particulars of educational background are obscure.

1905, he departed for Rumania to assume the pastorate of the Armenian Church in Bucharest. He subsequently was assigned as Vicar of Smyrna, Turkey. In 1910 he was assigned to serve the Worcester, Massachusetts parish by the Patriarch of Istanbul at the request of the Church Trustees. He served in Worcester until his election as Primate.

B. The Newly-Elected Primate at Work

The election of Father Vehouni allayed the fears of many faithful who were apprehensive over the delay of the official proclamation of the election by His Holiness.[1] The first meeting of the Primate and the Central Executive Committee was held on January 7, 1914, during which the encyclical from the Catholicos installing Vehouni was read.

In his first year of office, Father Vehouni concentrated his efforts on reorganizing the Diocese. His next area of concern involved extensive parish visitations. The pastors of the New York, Fowler, and Los Angeles parishes had embroiled themselves in serious problems which were eventually settled by the Primate. Father Vehouni was also called upon to mediate in the case of several clergymen who had acted subversively against the best interests of the Armenian Church. Father Kaft'anian, the former Locum-Tenens, presented one of the greatest obstacles to centralization of authority by encouraging dissension among the parishes.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean ("Minutes of the Central Executive Committee"), December 16, 1913, p. 45.; "Amerigahay Arhachnortagan Khntirĕ" ("The Problem of the Primacy of Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, January 10, 1914, p. 41 ; Adenakrout'iwn Amerigahayots' Erespokhanagan Zhoghovoy ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of the Armenians of America"), Worcester, Mass., November 26-27, 1914, p. 5.

1. The Reorganization of the Office of the Diocese

Even before his confirmation as Primate was received, Father Vehouni busied himself with the task of putting the Diocesan Office in order. Letters, official papers, and documents had been strewn about haphazardly and were yet unfiled. He took the initiative in collecting and assembling all these and organizing office procedures more efficiently.[1]

Next the Primate presided at the meetings of the Central Executive Committee and the Religious Council, already overburdened with difficult and complex issues awaiting solution. He found the Diocesan treasury in a deplorable state and took steps to create a sound Diocesan budget. He subsequently assigned annual financial quotas to each of the eighteen parishes, the amount to be based upon their membership figures. New York, one of the largest parishes, paid a

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn Amerighayots' Erespokhanagan Zhoghovoy, November 26-27, 1914, pp. 3-4; D.E.S. "Amerigahayk'" ("Armenian-Americans"), Dajar, December 31, 1914, pp. 409-412.

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quota of $350 in contrast to $25 paid by the Portland, Maine parish, one of the smallest.[1] In his pastoral visitations the Primate urged financial support for the Diocese. He emphasized the need for individual contributions from each and every parishioner, thereby avoiding complete reliance upon the well-to-do members for financial assistance. This practice led to some criticism, as had been the case with the first Primate, Bishop Sarajian. Despite his efforts, at the end of 1914 the Primate succeeded in collecting only $633 out of a proposed budget of $1700.[2]

Father Vehouni continued to urge the people towards general recognition of the Diocese as the church's central authority and mother institution. Strangely enough, one of the major points of criticism later levelled against Father Vehouni was his mismanagement of Diocesan funds.[3]

2. In Search of Peace and Order

During his first year in office, the Primate visited various parishes of the Diocese with the hope of establishing peace and order. An encyclical from the Catholicos on November 14, 1914, instructed Father Vehouni to labor among his flock in an attempt to restore harmony among bitterly opposed factions, "that all may be one."[1] The encyclical also indicated that the North American Diocese must extend its jurisdiction to include parishes of South Canada and America.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean," January 7, 1914, p. 48.

[2] *Adenakrout'iwn Amerigahayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovoy*, November 26-27, 1914, p. 17.

[3] *Artsanakrout'iwnk' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovoy Erek' Shrchanneroun*" ("Minutes of Three Diocesan Conventions"), Worcester, Mass., February 18, 1917, p. 21.

Deeply aware of the dissension among parishes and their strained relations with the Diocesan central authority, the Primate pleaded for a reemphasis of the dignity and leadership of the Church and for the creation of a genuine spiritual and ecclesiastical atmosphere within the Diocese. The three parishes of New York, Fowler, and Los Angeles were plagued with strife and misunderstanding. In his annual report at the Diocesan Convention in 1914, Father Vehouni emphatically stated that the mountainous obstacles confronting these parishes were caused by Father Kaft'anian, the former Locum-Tenens.[2]

Because of their rebellious attitudes, the Church Trustees in New York had been suspended by the order of Bishop Iwt'iwjian, the Plenipotentiary. Father Vehouni labored long and hard to restore peace and cordial relations with the Diocese.[3]

In Fowler, California, conflict centered about Father Ghewont Martougēsian, a priest who had been defrocked since 1907. He had agreed with the Church Trustees to be allowed to preach in the local Armenian Church after regular Sunday morning church services. In one instance, he even went so far as to wear the full garb of a priest and conducted services, totally disregarding the interdict imposed upon him. As misunderstandings increased among differing parties, court appearances became more frequent. In the end, the judge ruled that Martougēsian be allowed to preach, but as a layman. This decision was contested by the local Church Trustees of Fowler and the hearing was scheduled for May 27, 1914. The Primate was subpoenaed to appear in court with the documents verifying that the Catholicos had suspended Martougēsian from his priestly duties. However, Father Vehouni was unable to supply these papers because all official papers of the Diocese were still in the possession of Father Kaft'anian who refused to relinquish them.[1] The supporters of Martougēsian declared that no legal charter bound their church, St. Gregory Armenian Church, to the American Diocese. Rather, they insisted, it was a separate and independent institution. The judge, however, consented to allow the Diocese to produce evidence that St. Gregory was indeed founded as a branch of the American Diocese under the jurisdiction of Holy Ēchmiadzin.[2]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn Amerigahayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhovhovoy, Worcester, Mass., November 26-27, 1914, p. 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

[3] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

Pending a decision by the court, the Primate made plans to return to Worcester. Before his departure, however, he received an unexpected letter from Martougēsian, requesting an audience with him. Martougēsian expressed the desire to refrain from further conflicts with the Diocese, to subject himself to the authority of the Primate, and to reconcile his differences with the Church Trustees of St. Gregory Church. He further pleaded with Father Vehouni to intercede on his behalf with the Catholicos, requesting that he be restored to his priestly duties. The Primate assured Martougēsian that he would do everything in his power to grant him a fair hearing with the Catholicos in Ēchmiadzin.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, November 26-27, 1914, p. 8. "Artsanakrout'iwn," January 7, 1914, p. 49.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, November 26-27, 1914, p. 10.

Thus, disunity within the parish of Fowler came to an end. The parishioners gathered for a celebration of the Divine Liturgy by the Primate, whose sermon for the day emphasized the theme that it was better to be concerned with that which united rather than that which divided.

From Fowler the Primate turned his attention to the parish of Los Angeles where the pastor, Father Sahag Nazarēt'ian, had aroused much controversy by leading a secular life and operating a personal business in addition to his priestly duties. He administered various sacraments and rituals without consulting the local church authorities. One segment of the parish, those from Caucasian Armenia, supported him in his actions, ignoring the Diocesan ban imposed upon him. Those from Turkish-Armenia did not support him, but secured their own pastor, Father T'ēot'oros Isahagian, whose appointment was confirmed by the Catholicos.[1] The Caucasian Armenians and Father Nazarēt'ian disregarded the Primate's advice to refrain from dissenting activities and the conflict deepened. On January 25, 1914, an encyclical from the Catholicos instructed Primate Vehouni to make a final appeal for Father Nazarēt'ian to curb his activities.[2] Father Nazarēt'ian conceded and Father Isahagian resigned. The opposing trustees were also reconciled and a Standing Committee was formed which elected Father Isahagian as the temporary pastor.

Once again prudence and moderation bore fruit and a mission, begun amidst mountainous obstacles, ended in a relatively quiet atmosphere of peace and order.

3. The Problem of Unruly Priests

The problems which had created an unhealthy atmosphere within the Armenian Church communities were many. One major source arose from a team of unqualified priests whose questionable activities kept the church and community in turmoil.

Among these dissenting personalities was the former Locum-Tenens, Father Kaft'anian, who presented one of the major obstacles to centralization of authority by encouraging dissension among the parishes and priests. He ignored many appeals to return the official documents and office equipment of the Diocese. He also declined to respond to the personal calls and letters of the Primate. Thus Father Vehouni was forced to report to Ēchmiadzin Father Kaft'anian's unwillingness to cooperate. An indictment issued on July 30, 1914 from Holy Ēchmiadzin defrocked Father Kaft'anian.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

This encyclical not only enumerated the many errors of Father Kaft'anian, but also dealt with the problem of ill-equipped priests more involved in temporal activities than in the advancement of spiritual goals. Such priests acted subversively against the best interests of the Armenian Church. The Catholicos authorized the Primate to take the necessary steps in dealing with these priests with a spirit of charity and mercy. Those who remained incorrigible and troublesome would be subject to severe punishment and defrocking.[2]

In his report to the Diocesan Convention of 1914, Primate Vehouni stated that his policy toward the offending clergymen had been one of sympathy and charity. He would now be unable to pursue this conciliatory policy toward those who persisted in sowing seeds of dissension and chaos.[3] He particularly attacked the roaming priests who, in open defiance of the central authority, preyed upon innocent people for their own financial and partisan interests.[1] The local papers of the communities often reported anecdotes about these clerics who lowered the prestige of the church. It was a consolation that they remained in the minority.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan" ("Official"), The Gotchnag, October 14, 1914, pp. 1097-1098 ; Adenakrout'iwn, November 26-27, 1914, p. 13.

[2] "Badjēn Hasdadout'ean Gontagi" ("Copy of the Encyclical of Institution"), The Gotchnag, February 21, 1914, pp. 186-187.

[3] Adenakrout'iwn, November 26-27, 1914, p. 13.

4. The Primate and His Critics

At the Diocesan Assembly which convened on November 26-27, 1914, in Worcester, the Primate reported his activities since his installation. He spoke of the improvement in the orderliness of the Church and of her return from a chaotic state. Among new priests who had arrived from abroad to reinforce the ranks of the clergy in this country were Fathers Vagharshag Arshagouni, Vahram Nazarēt'ian, Shahē Kasbarian, Dirayr Markarian, and Bedros Vartanian. He also reported that the Holy Translator's Church in Providence had been built and consecrated by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian in 1914. His report was not received with universal approval.[2]

At the conclusion of his report Primate Vehouni left the hall to afford the delegates the opportunity to voice their opinions freely. "It became evident," wrote one delegate, "that the relationship between the Primate and his co-workers had deteriorated considerably during the course of one year. Disharmony arose between the Primate and nationalists concerning his domineering attitude toward the National Defense Union. One faction contemplated asking for the resignation of the Primate."[1] Men who had supported the Primate in his election a year ago now became his ardent critics. It was indeed a different spirit that now prevailed from the time of Father Vehouni's assumption of office. General disorder, feuding, and rivalries among political factions made the life of the Church somewhat intolerable.

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[1] "Egeghets'agan Khntirner," ("Ecclesiastical Problems"), The Gotchnag, February 14, 1914, p. 161. "Bashdōnagan" ("Official"), The Gotchnag, December 26, 1914, pp. 1236-1237.

[2] "Amerigahay Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovĕ," ("The Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, December 12, 1914, p. 1192.

Compounded with this was the news from the homeland of the Turkish atrocities besetting the Armenian people. This spectre hung over the Armenian-American populace and served to intensify the convulsive state of the immigrant churches and communities in America. Loyalty to the homeland received priority and all major efforts were directed toward aiding the cause of the fatherland. It was expected that the Church would play a leading role and would become a bridge of conciliation between quarreling brethern. The Primate was accused of being apathetic toward the plight and role of the nationalistic organization, the Armenian National Defense

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[1] "Amerigahay Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově" ("The Representative Assembly of Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, December 12, 1914, p. 1192.

Union of America. A dispute between the Primate and this organization later caused him the loss of his office and created an internal schism in the church which lasted for five years.

C. The Armenian National Defense Union of America

On January 7, 1914, the Central Council of the Armenian Church resolved to create an inter-political committee to achieve unity among the disputing Armenian factions in America for the purpose of dealing with the national crisis in Turkish-Armenia. Official letters were forwarded to the headquarters of the four major political parties.[1] The Veragazmeal Hnch'ag and Tashnag Parties at first declined the invitations and the proposal seemed doomed.[2] Those who believed in the merit of such a proposed organization continued to labor for its realization. Prominent among them was Archbishop Moushegh Seropian of Boston in whose name was laid the groundwork for this movement. He firmly believed that such an organization must be on a national level and must function under the supervision of the Armenian Diocese and be presided over by the Primate.[3] Hence, on November 22, 1914, in Worcester, Massachusetts, the organization known as the National Defense Committee was founded. The Veragazmeal Hnch'ag Party, the Hnch'ag Party, and the Rhamgavar Party rallied around the Church. Later the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Armenian Evangelical Church joined the movement. The organization came to be known as the Armenian National Defense Union of America.[1]

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," January 7, 1914, p. 50.

[2] Ibid., August 18, 1914, p. 54 ; Adenakrout'iwn, November 26-27, 1914, p. 21.

[3] Adenakrout'iwn, November 26-27, 1914, p. 28.

The Union sought to secure funds and to forward them to relief agencies in Turkey and Russia. It aspired to secure the sympathy of the American public for Armenians in those countries. The Tashnag Party failed to participate in the organization's work. The Primate initiated many fruitless negotiations with the Tashnags.

The Union coordinated its activities in Europe with Bōghos Noubar Pasha who was the representative of His Holiness, the Catholicos of All Armenians.[2] Noubar Pasha, as the head of an Armenian diplomatic mission appointed by the Catholicos, had made Paris his headquarters and was in continual contact with the Allies to secure their assistance on behalf of the Armenians at the proposed Peace Conference in Versailles in 1919.[3] Thus the aims and desires of all ecclesiastical and political parties were one, from the standpoint of diplomacy and national interests and destiny. Propaganda in this country was aimed at cultivating the sympathy of Americans for the Armenian cause.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn ev Goch' Amerigayi Hayots'" ("An Official Announcement and Appeal to the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, October 2, 1915, p. 872 ; K. Lazian, Hayasdan ev Hay Tade, pp. 201-203.

[2] "Khmpakragan Desout'iwner" ("Editorial Views"), The Gotchnag, June 21, 1915, pp. 480-481.

[3] "Artsanakrout'iwn Getronagan Varch'out'ean," August 9, 1916, pp. 77-79.

By August 9, 1916, it became clear that a growing tension existed between the Primate and the members of the National Defense Union.[1] The controversy centered around Vehouni's refusal to subvert his hierarchal allegiance to the Catholicos by favoring decisions made by the Union to delegate observers to the Caucasus. At one of the regular meetings of the Central Council of the Diocese the Primate informed its members of the deliberations of the National Defense Union.[2] The Central Council gave its support to the Primate and notified the National Defense Union accordingly. It was also decided that in the event that the Union persisted in its decision, a meeting of the Primate, Diocesan Commission, and the Central Council would take action against the Union. On August 30, 1916, a conference was called and the general consensus was that the Liaison Committee must temporarily cease to participate in the meetings of the Union until the role of the Primate in that organization was more clearly recognized. A telegram from Ēchmiadzin was read at that meeting reaffirming that there was no need for a delegation.[1]

The Primate, pursuing an uncompromising course, declared that the Armenian Apostolic Church had terminated its participation in the National Defense Union.[2] Many thought that the Primate was seeking leverage and was manipulating to take all the authority into his own hands. Even his associates, who maintained a more moderate position, were dismayed at his arrogance and offensiveness which hindered the cause of unity. In the coming months all of these sentiments became more aggravated, resulting in his impeachment.

D. The Last Acts of the Primate

Prior to the resignation of Father Vehouni in 1917 two significant events occurred: (1) The Diocesan Convention convened in New York from October 29-31, 1916, and (2) an illuminated parchment from the Pontiff, Kēork V, was presented to President Woodrow Wilson on December 14, 1916.

The Primate was an uncompromising man and was unable to achieve tranquillity. After the Diocesan Convention of October 29-31, 1916, the uneasy relationship of the Primate and the Diocesan leaders deteriorated, resulting in the condemnation of the Primate by the Diocesan Convention on February 18, 1917.

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[1] "Artsanakrout'iwn," September 1, 1916, p. 83.

[2] *Ibid.*

1. The Approaching Storm

In the Diocesan Convention which convened on October 29-31, 1916, the Primate was accused by his adversaries of distorting facts. A series of complaints which had lain dormant since the Diocesan Convention of November 26-27, 1914, now emerged. One criticism directed against the Primate was that he never occuppied himself with the reexamination of the Constitution of the Diocese. In that Convention a committee had been formed to revise the By-Laws in conjunction with the Primate.[1] In the Convention of October, 1916, the Primate was advised not to issue "Administrative Directives" because they only added to the confusion within the parishes.

A second complaint concerned the financial situation of the Diocese. Father Vehouni had failed to make the financial records and reports available. He was charged with obstructing the work of reconciliation between political factions and with straining relations with Armenian Protestants.[2] The situation became intensified when Father Vehouni was accused of misinterpreting a pontifical encyclical, dated June 1, 1916, which dealt with matters concerning the Armenian communities in America.[3] The Primate convened the

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghowoy Erek' Shrchanneroun, February 18, 1917, p. 20.

[2] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[3] Ibid.

Diocesan Convention on October 29-31, 1916, in Worcester. Here Father Vehouni revealed that he had severed his relations with the National Defense Union of America. The Convention instructed him to renew his negotiations with the National Defense Union and to cooperate in the decisions and recommendations regarding national interests. However, no conciliation was in sight. The Primate and his opponents found each other increasingly less tolerable. His antagonists were determined to depose him.

2. Primate Vehouni with President Wilson

In gratitude for America's aid and sympathy toward the Armenian people, Catholicos Kēork V of Ēchmiadzin sent an illuminated parchment to the President of the United States. The presentation of the document was made on December 14, 1916, by Father Vehouni.[1] He was accompanied by Senators Henry Cabor Lodge and John W. Weeks of Massachusetts; other officials from Massachusetts, California, Ohio, Texas, Iowa, and New York; and distinguished representatives of the Armenian community.

The Primate solemnly addressed the President and thanked him on behalf of the Catholicos and the Armenians for the aid extended to them. He reflected upon the colors used in the illumination of the parchment. Red symbolized the blood of innocent victims; black signified the dark fate to which the Armenians had been subjected; and the gold in the center represented the hearts of the Armenian people, so filled with deep gratitude for the President and people of the United States. The President in turn responded with mutual kindness and affection, confessing that America had not done her full share to deserve such gratitude from Armenia. He continued in the following words:

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[1] V. R. "Armenia Thanks America," The New Armenia, January 1, 1917, p. 13.

> We have tried to do what was possible to save your people from the ravages of the war. My regret is that we have been able to accomplish so little. There have been many suffering people as a result of that terrible struggle and the lot of none has touched the American heart more than the suffering of the Armenians.[1]

This was the second time that an Armenian clergyman had had the honor of being a guest of the President of the United States in the White House. Once again in the Oval Hall there resounded the pleas of an Armenian Venerable who resided at the foot of Mount Ararat. The memorial read:

> Mr. President:
>
> Joining our children in their progress, we beseech the Lord of All that the humane compassion of yourself and your nation may not diminish and that we may not be left forsaken under the hand of the oppressor, but by your assistance may be delivered and rescued from the heavy yoke. May you be given long life and strength in the grace and the help of the Lord.[2]

In the years following 1916 President Wilson appeared more than once to fulfill his pledge that, "at an opportune time more would be accomplished."[1] On the eve of the declaration of the independent Armenian Republic in 1918, President Wilson declared the right of self-determination of Armenia. In 1920 he supported the admission of the Armenian Republic into the concert of free nations.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

E. Schism in the Church

Antagonism was rampant in the Armenian Church. Long and bitter fights had been waged between the Primate and his opponents for control of the church. Neither the Primate nor his adversaries showed a conciliatory attitude. Dissension in the church posed the threat of a definite schism. She was in a state of chaos, much to the bewilderment of the faithful. Many thought that the Armenian Church in America had come to her end. The opponents of the Primate were determined to defeat him.

1. Prelude to Impeachment

In the opening days of 1917 Armenian newspapers echoed rumors of the possible resignation of the Primate.[2] It was believed that Father Vehouni had forwarded his resignation to the Catholicos for consideration. No explanation was provided to the media to keep the public informed. According to

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "T'emagan Kordzer" ("Diocesan Affairs: The Resignation of the Primate"), Azk, January 2, 1917.

Articles 8, 9, and 30 of the Constitution, it is the prerogative of the Diocesan Convention to accept or deny the resignation of the Primate. It becomes evident then, that if the rumors of the Primate's resignation were true, the only motivation for that action was that he knew well that a Diocesan Assembly would not be sympathetic to him. On the other hand, he had a better chance with His Holiness, who, at least, would invite the delegates to reach a compromise with the Primate.

One recurring controversy during the incumbency of Father Vehouni concerned the reluctance of the Tashnag Party to join the Armenian National Defense Union of America. Their participation was desired for the purpose of achieving real unity among Armenians in America and thus, by a united effort, striving to support the Armenian cause. At the Diocesan Convention in Worcester, October 29-31, 1916, a Committee was elected to negotiate with the Tashnag Party. It was decided, in the event that negotiations proved fruitless, to convene a Diocesan Convention on February 18, 1917, the sole item on the agenda being the issue of unity.[1] The Tashnag Party stated that their reluctance in joining the Union stemmed from the fact that too many personal conflicts were involved in the deliberations of this organization. One of the major obstacles was the case of the Primate.[1] Father Vehouni was charged with defying the resolution passed by the Convention that he conduct discussions with interested groups. He refused to attend regular meetings and caused dissention much to the satisfaction of the Tashnag Party.[2]

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[1] Editorial, "Zhoghovourt'in Tadasdanin," ("For the Judgement of the People"), Azk, February 13, 1917.

[2] Ibid.

Another criticism directed against the Primate was his agreement with the Tashnag Party that the respective organizations within the Union would ratify the designated representatives of the other organizations. This stipulation clearly indicated the intentions of the Tashnags--to cast their veto upon those persons with whom they had no favor. The Tashnag Party had assumed the role of "defending" the very Primate whom they had persecuted in the recent year. The Primate was openly abused for his new policies by elements within the Diocese. Not only was his leadership challenged, but his abilities as a clergyman were questioned. The Armenian press called for a final confrontation. Voices from all segments of the community demanded the resignation of the Primate.[3]

2. The Confrontation

On February 18, 1917, the Diocesan Convention was convened in Worcester amidst intense emotions. Father Vehouni was determined to preserve the dignity of his office and the delegates were equally determined to banish him. The latter succeeded, leaving the Church in severe administrative difficulties.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

The Convention was convened with the intent of reviewing the problem of unity. The Tashnag Party stated its position. The impression conveyed was that this Party was unnecessarily hesitant about joining with other organizations in the Armenian National Defense Union. When the discussion came to a stalemate, the representatives from Boston moved to deal with the problem of the Primate and to listen to both sides of the controversy. A heated discussion followed concerning Articles 7, 13, 29, and 42 of the Diocesan Constitution.[1] In particular, Article 4, which states that the agenda of the Convention is prepared by the Central Executive Committee to whom all complaints against the Primate must first be presented, was disputed.[2] The Primate refuted the arguments and forbade further discussion. In spite of his warnings, the Convention continued its deliberations with the consent of the majority. At this point the Primate, accompanied by his supporters, left the Convention. A delegate was despatched to invite the Primate to return to the Convention and personally answer criticisms directed against him. To this the Primate replied, "I have dissolved the Convention. The Convention cannot continue and I will not attend it."[1]

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovoy Erek' Shrchanneroun, February 18, 1917, p. 11; Editorial, "Zhoghovourtin Tadasdanin," Azk, February 27, 1917.

[2] Sahmanatrout'iwn, 1903, p. 15.

Upon his refusal to reappear before the Convention, his resignation was called for by the majority of the delegates. The Convention decided to inform the Central Executive Committee of their decision to proceed to elect a new Locum-Tenens within the next two weeks. In case of delay, the executive committee of the Convention was given the right to extend an invitation to Father Vartan Kasbarian of Fresno to assume the office of Locum-Tenens. In the event of his refusal, the Central Executive Committee would extend the same invitation to Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian.

On February 23, 1917, Father Vehouni issued a refutation entitled "Bashdōnagan Pats'adrout'iwn." In this he emphatically condemned the call for his resignation and the proceedings of the Diocesan Convention and defended his legal incumbency pending the final decision of the Catholicos.[2] The Central Executive Committee failed to carry out the resolutions as directed by the Convention. The Central Executive Committee invited Father Kasbarian to become the Locum-Tenens. He declined and Bishop Giwlēsērian was called upon. He accepted, but only under certain conditions which he did not disclose publicly.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk', February 18, 1917, p. 13.

[2] Arsēn Vehouni, "Bashdōnagan Pats'adrout'iwn" ("Official Explanation"), Azk, March 3, 1917.

The Church again found herself in the midst of uncertainty and controversy. What was more tragic was that there seemed to be no "wise physician" to heal the disease of schism with the "medicine of faith."

The Armenian community thus experienced a political division which split the Church. The non-Tashnag faction adopted a more solicitous policy toward the Church and aligned themselves with the Pontiff in Ēchmiadzin. The Tashnag Party, in their support of Father Vehouni, were uncompromising in their relationship with the Diocese. The refuge they had taken in the noncanonical anti-primacy which they had established in Providence in February, 1917, under the leadership of Father Arsēn Vehouni was short lived. The arrival of the Plenipotentiary Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian from Ēchmiadzin in 1921, resulted in the reunification of the parishes and rendered the Providence contingency obsolete. Father Vehouni departed that year for Istanbul where he was assigned as a preacher. He served on the Religious Council of the Patriarchate until his lonely death in 1929.[1]

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[1] Holy Saviour National Hospital, "Antarts Megnoghner" ("Obituaries"), *Ĕntartsag Darets'oyts' Sourp P'rgich' Hiwantanots'i* ("General Yearbook of the Holy Saviour National Hospital") (Constantinople: M. Ch'ouhajian - T. Azadian Press, 1929), p. 340; Ourour (pseud.), "T'ghtagts'out'iwnner" ("Reports"), *Tzain Haireniatz*, November 11, 1899; Menawor (pseud.), "Namag Amerigayēn" ("Letter from America"), *Armenia*, February 15, 1905.

F. Expansion of Churches

The acquisition of Holy Translators Church in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1914, Saint Vartanants' Church in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1916, and Saint Peter's Church in Troy, New York, in 1916, coincided with the most crucial years for the Armenians in the United States and abroad. In the homeland hundreds of thousands of Armenians fell victim to the Turkish massacres of April 24, 1915. These tragic events affected the Armenian immigrants in America and also had their impact on the religious life of the Diocese. Interest in Armenian political activities became intense. The Tashnag Party shifted its policy from one of indifference to one of keen interest in dominating the Church in anticipation of gaining control of the Armenian communities. The opponents of the Tashnags reacted vigorously by barring Tashnag members from the elective offices of both church and Diocesan administrations.

The three communities of Providence, Lowell, and Troy were able to acquire churches through sacrifice and meager contributions. The community of Lowell constructed a church building, while Providence and Troy purchased edifices from other denominations.

1. Holy Translators Church
Providence, Rhode Island

After the death of Father Sisagian in 1899, several pastors served the Providence community and its surrounding towns until 1913.[1] During the years from 1899 to 1913 attempts were made in 1905, 1906, and 1911 to acquire a church building. These met with little success.

The first attempt in 1905 was to purchase a church building for $5000. Primate Sarajian was invited to visit Providence and to undertake personally the fund-raising activities.[2] The Church treasury at that time contained only $500 in cash. However, no response came from the Primate. This both angered and embittered church officials toward him.[3] Even more disturbing to them was the fact that Archbishop Sarajian had not assigned the parish a permanent pastor.

In 1906 another attempt was undertaken by the Church Trustees to purchase a Protestant Church on Smith Street in Providence. This also met with defeat.[4]

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[1] The Church was initially consecrated as Srpots' Tarkmanch'ats' (Holy Translators Church). Since 1930 it has been referred to as St. Sahag and Mesrob Church, so-called after the two figures who were instrumental in the Armenian literary renaissance of the fifth century.

[2] "Artsanadedr Srpots' T'arkmanch'ats Egeghets'woy Hokapartsagan Zhoghovnerou," ("Records of the Church Trustees of the Holy Translators Church of Providence"), Providence, Rhode Island, November 20, 1905, pp. 83-84.

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] *Ardsat'eay Hopelean*, Providence, Rhode Island, p. 9.

In 1911, with renewed determination, the community again made plans to acquire a Church. The Church Trustees formed a Church Building Committee which in August, 1913, negotiated with officials of the Baptist Church on Jefferson Street for its purchase. In October, 1913, the Baptist Church was purchased for $9,500.[1] Setrag Soghigian, chairman of the Building Committee, spearheaded a campaign in which a total of $3,000 was collected. The Church underwent partial renovations. In 1913 Father Vagharshag Arshagouni from Zeitun, Turkey, became the pastor of the new church. He served in the parish until 1916.[2]

Father Arshagouni celebrated the first Divine Liturgy in the new church on January 20, 1914. The church was consecrated on June 7, 1914, by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian.[3] To the immigrant community in those days the Armenian Church was indeed a source for pride and power.

The premises of the church were expanded in 1960 by the construction of the Agavian Auditorium. It was officially dedicated by Archbishop Sion Manougian in February, 1961. Since then the Auditorium has served as a central meeting place for the Providence community.[1]

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[1] "Artsanadedr," Providence, Rhode Island, October 13, 1913, pp. 277-279; October 20, 1913, p. 290; October 26, 1913, p. 281.

[2] _Ibid._, November 23, 1913, pp. 286-287.

[3] _Ibid._, May 14, 27, June 3, 10, 1914, pp. 305-308.

2. Saint Vartanants' Church
Lowell, Massachusetts

In 1875 individual Armenian immigrants first began to migrate to Lowell, Massachusetts.[2] It was after 1885, however, that Armenians in larger numbers settled in this city because of the employment offered by the great textile mills which occupied a large tract in the heart of the city. These Armenian immigrants were chiefly from the towns and villages of the province of Harpoot, Turkey.

The first attempts at organization of the Armenian community in Lowell date back to May 5, 1888, with the arrival of a group of young Armenians who were employed at a leading cotton manufacturing firm. Among these were Krikor Krikorian, Margos Khach'adourian, and Moushegh Magarian.[3] By the late 1890s almost every full-fledged organization characteristic of an Armenian community in the United States was represented in Lowell. At this time also first attempts were made to organize the religious life of the immigrants. Visiting clergymen provided spiritual nourishment to the people but the need was felt for more organized efforts. Thus in 1910 a Church Ladies Association was formed which gave impetus for the formation of a Church Building Committee under the chairmanship of Margos Dēr Manuelian on March 23, 1913.[1] Campaigns and fund-raising drives were initiated. Some anxious parishioners even attempted to accelerate the construction of the foundation by digging with spade in hand. The church on 60 Lawrence Street was built at a cost of $10,476.35.[2]

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[1] Fiftieth Anniversary, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, 1913-1963, Providence, Rhode Island.

[2] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, p. 135.

[3] Fiftieth Anniversary, St. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, 1916-1966, Lowell, Massachusetts.

On July 3, 1915, a meeting of the Armenian community took place at Saint John's Chapel on Gorham Street in Lowell. At this meeting a Board of Church Trustees was formed consisting of seven members--Margos Dēr Manuēlian, Nazat Moush-eghian, Donabed S. Kazanjian, Mgrdich Kazanjian, Misak Ghazarian, Arhak'el Arhak'elian, and Margos Barsamian. Margos Dēr Manuēlian served as chairman of the meeting.

Consecration ceremonies for the church were held on April 16, 1916, by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian and Divine Liturgy was administered by Father Arsēn Vehouni, the Primate. Asadour Babigian served as Godfather. Father Yeghishē Kalch'enjian of Lawrence was appointed as pastor of the church, named St. Vartanants' Church.

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[1] Ashjian, p. 135; Fortieth Anniversary, St. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 1916-1956, Lowell, Mass., October 21, 1956, pp. 97-98.

[2] Fortieth Anniversary, Lowell, Mass., October 21, 1956, p. 98.

From 1916-1931 the Lowell parish had under its spiritual jurisdiction the Armenian communities lying to the east, southeast, and northeast. In 1932, with the formation of the Lawrence Church and parish, these Armenian communities, by order of the Diocese, came under the jurisdiction of Lawrence.[1] In 1948 the Lowell parish was further diminished by the annexation of the Salem and Peabody districts to the Holy Trinity Church of Boston (now in Cambridge), and of Andover to the Lawrence Armenian Church. In addition to serving the people of Lowell itself, the church administers to the communities of Nashua, Concord, Manchester, and Pelham in New Hampshire and to Billerica, Bedford, Chelmsford, Tyngsboro, Tewksbury, and Dracut in Massachusetts.

3. Saint Peter's Church, Troy, New York

The beginnings of the Troy-Watervliet community date back to the 1880s.[2] Armenian immigrants from the provinces of Harpoot and Cilicia were the first to settle in Troy, attracted by the manufacturing firms found in the city.

The religious life of the community started in 1899 when a Board of Church Trustees was formed. In compliance with the friendly atmosphere which marked the relationship of the Armenian community and the Protestant Episcopalian

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[1] Fortieth Anniversary, Lowell, Mass., October 21, 1956, p. 100.

[2] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, p. 246.

Church, Armenians were allowed use of Saint Paul's Church on State Street in Troy.[1] This they did for twelve years, until, in 1911, a church building was purchased for $3000 in Green Island. On October 8, 1911, Father Ghewont Bahlawouni celebrated the first Divine Liturgy in the new church. The consecration ceremonies took place in July, 1916, by Fathers Dirayr Markarian and Drip'on Bidzagian.[2]

In 1927 the Armenians purchased the North Second Street Methodist Church located on Fifth Avenue and Jacob Street in Troy. The undertaking was headed by Kasbar Dēr Mesrobian, Hagop Aghazarian, and Toros Dēr Bedrosian of the Building Committee. The new church was consecrated by the Primate, Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, on March 25, 1928.[3]

In 1955 the Armenian community acquired forty-three acres of land as a gift from Agnes Wiswall, a long-time friend of the Armenian community.[4] The site is on a hilltop on 19th Street in Watervliet. The Armenians retained their old church until October, 1970, when the construction of a new Armenian Church was completed. Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the new church on October 18, 1970. In November 16,

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[1] Consecration, St. Peter Armenian Apostolic Church, Watervliet, New York, September 19, 1971.

[2] Sources do not reveal why the delay in the consecration of the Church.

[3] Adenakrout'iwnner, New York, October 7-8, 1928, pp. 28-29.

[4] Consecration, Watervliet, New York, September 19, 1971.

1970, the old Church was transferred to its new owners, the Bethlehem Temple Church of Troy. The consecration of the new Church took place on September 19, 1971, by Archbishop Torkom Manougian, the Primate.[1]

G. Summary and Conclusion

The central event of Father Vehouni's Primacy was the massacre of Armenians in Turkey. The physical, psychological and economic impact of this genocidal cataclysm was on a scale unprecedented in modern history. While physically secure, American Armenians found themselves in the face of a seemingly hopeless tragedy which, incredibly enough, did not serve to bring about any significant unity.

However, in 1913, when Father Vehouni assumed the Primacy, neither the war nor the massacres had yet occurred. He made an auspicious start by settling a number of conflicts involving clergy and church trustees; he also reorganized the central Diocesan office and made many pastoral visitations. Despite his determined efforts, he received considerable criticism, especially after his refusal to participate in the Armenian National Defense Union--an organization formed to coordinate the efforts of the Armenian groups on behalf of their suffering brethren in Turkey and the Caucasus. While it is difficult to discern his reasons for this act, it seems that his vanity was a factor. Since he could not dominate the Union, he preferred to leave it. His dominating character drew the contempt of those who were close to him. Mounting discontent with his deportment resulted in his deposition as Primate.

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[1] Consecration, Watervliet, New York, September 19, 1971.

Clearly there was something deeply pathological about a community and a leadership that could not manage to come together at a time when mortal threats faced the Armenian nation in the Ottoman Empire. Under these circumstances the Diocesan Convention voted to depose the Primate, who summarily issued a refutation of the Convention's action. The Church split between two factions; one supporting the Primate and the other opposing him. Although the "schism" was soon healed, it established an unfortunate precedent for more disruptive schismatic activities in the thirties.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY (1917-1921)

The period between 1917 and 1921 was a dark chapter in the history of the Armenian Church in America. The Diocesan Convention of February 18, 1917, replaced the Primate with a Locum-Tenens, Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian, from the monastery of Armash, Turkey, who was at that time residing in Boston. The deposed Primate could not reconcile himself to this situation and adopted an active and vigorous anti-Diocesan policy. This desultory period continued until the arrival in 1921 of Bishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian, the Nuncio of Catholicos Kēork V of Ēchmiadzin, who intervened to restore ecclesiastical authority in the internal life of the church.

This critical chapter in the life of the church was coincidental with one of the most tumultuous periods in recent Armenian history. The years between 1917 and 1921 marked the birth and death of the Independent Republic of Armenia (1918-1920), and the subsequent Sovietization of the eastern part of traditional Armenia.[1] It was a period characterized by intense nationalism and revolutionary movement in anticipation of Armenian independence which had been lost since 1375 with the collapse of the Kingdom of Cilicia. This socio-political development fractionalized the Armenian community in America, producing two major opposing factions--one favoring the new republic, the other unwilling to accede to the governing party. The Tashnags who were in control of the government in Armenia were determined to exercise supremacy over ecclesiastical matters and dominate the churches in the United States. Toward this end they supported the activities of Father Vehouni to the point of supporting the establishment of a dissident diocese in Providence, Rhode Island.[1]

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[1] Two conflicting interpretations are provided concerning the Sovietization of Armenia. Armenia was Sovietized peacefully on December 2, 1920, as a result of a treaty signed between the Moscow representative Legran and the government of Armenia, according to Tashnag historiography. The

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Bolsheviks, on the other hand, insist that the Sovietization of Armenia on November 29, 1920, was due to an internal revolution carried through by the peasants and the working men of Armenia who overthrew the government and established the Soviet regime. The sources which support the Tashnag claim are: James W. Gerard, "Armenia, Russia, and the Lausanne Treaty," Lausanne Treaty - Turkey and Armenia (New York: American Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty, 1926) quoted in Atamian, The Armenian Community, pp. 242-244; Simon Vrats'ian, Hayasdan Bolshēwig Mourji ew T'rk'agan Sali Michew ("Armenia Between the Bolshevik Hammer and Turkish Anvil") (Beirut: Hamaskaine Press, 1953), pp. 134-135. The Bolshevik insistence that November 29 is the date of Armenian emancipation is found in Hairenik Weekly, June 17, 1954, reprinted from the Boston Globe, June 9, 1954; Simon Vratzian, "How Armenia was Sovietized," The Armenian Review, I (Winter, 1948), p. 77.

[1] Editorial, "Miag Loudzoumě," ("The Only Solution"), The Gotchnag, March 17, 1934, pp. 243-244.

A. An Historical Background

A series of alliances emerged during World War I, when on June 28, 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary was assassinated at Sarajevo,Bosnia. The Austrians blamed this incident on the Serbians. Europe was soon split into two camps, the Allied Powers and the Central Powers.

Armenian volunteers fought on the side of the Allies, much to the displeasure of the Turks who sided with the Central Powers. 1915 proved to be the _annus terribilis_ for the Armenians living in Turkey. The rulers of Turkey perpetrated a premeditated systematic plan of genocide by means of massacre, starvation, and deportation of the Armenians as a solution to the Armenian Question.[1] World War I and the genocide intensified Armenian nationalism. As the massacres continued intermittently, the need for self-defense became imperative for the Armenians to abort the Turkish policy of annihilation. This critical situation mobilized all Armenians and their political parties to bear arms against their common enemy, the Turk. The Tashnag Party played a prominent role in the revolutionary activities of this period.

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[1] For a treatment of the Armenian massacres consult the following: James Bryce, _The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916_ (London: Sir Joseph Causton and Sons, Ltd., 1916); Edward M. Bliss, _Turkey and the Armenian Atrocities_ (Philadelphia, J. H. Moore and Co., 1896); Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks," _The New Armenia_, September 15, 1917, p. 278; Aram Andonian, comp., _The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportations and Massacres of Armenians_ (London, 1920).

By November 7, 1917, the Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia. Through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, on March 3, 1918, signed between victorious Germany and Lenin's government, the Russians ceded to Turkey the Turkish-Armenian territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batum.[1]

The vacuum left by the evacuating Russian forces proved advantageous for Turkish forces who captured these provinces and penetrated further into Transcaucasia. On March 9, 1918, a Provisional Transcaucasian Government was formed consisting of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Persistent Turkish assaults forced the Armenians to enter into the decisive battles of Sardarabad, Pash Aparan, and Karakilisse. Due to Turkish assaults on the government of Transcaucasia, Georgia proclaimed its independence on May 26, to be followed on May 28, 1918, by Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Tashnag Party exercised great influence in the Armenian Republic, most of the Cabinet members being associated with this party. The Armenian flag that they adopted was made of three horizontal colors, red, blue, and orange. It was this very flag that was to become a major source of controversy between the Tashnags and their opponents, especially after the fall of the Independent Republic in 1920.

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[1] Vratzian, "How Armenia was Sovietized," The Armenian Review, I (Winter, 1948), p. 77.

The creation of the Armenian Republic was the signal for a surge of patriotism, rallying Armenians from all corners of the world, many of whom poured in their voluntary contributions to rebuild the fatherland. The Armenians of America, more than those of any other country, gave proof of their generosity. On November 11, 1918, World War I ended in an armistice. A delegation of the Armenian government proceeded to Paris to present Armenian claims at the Peace Conference. The misery within the Armenian Republic during 1919 and 1920 was beyond description. Hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees jammed the streets of the infant republic.

On January 19, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference at Paris recognized the government of the Armenian State and recommended that a mandate under the League of Nations be provided. The Supreme Council, on April 25, 1920, requested that the United States, through President Woodrow Wilson, take the mandate over Armenia. President Wilson placed the case before Congress, along with a comprehensive report by General James G. Harbord of the United States Army who had headed a committee of investigation into Armenia. The pros and cons of the matter were discussed at length. Finally, on May 31, the United States decided not to take over the mandate, but President Wilson promised aid by the drawing of a boundary for the new state of Armenia.

On August 10, 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed between the Allied Powers and Turkey, which provided that a large portion of eastern Anatolia be ceded to the Armenian Republic. A month later, in September, Mustafa Kemal Pasha of Turkey attacked the Armenian Republic, capturing town after town. Once again Armenians were left defenseless against the Turks and faced the raids of the Russian Red Army. The Armenians were forced to make a major decision and to determine whether the Republic should follow a pro-Turkish or pro-Russian orientation. During the night of November 30 - December 1, an extraordinary meeting took place in Erevan, composed of prominent members of the government of the Rupublic and the Tashnag ruling party who cast their lot with the Soviets. On December 2, the government signed an agreement with Legran, the Soviet representative in Armenia, transferring power to the Bolsheviks who declared the "Independent Socialist Republic". In spite of the terms of agreement, the leaders of the Tashnag Party were summarily arrested by Bolshevik authorities and exiled to Russia.

Meanwhile, on December 21, all laws and regulations pertaining to Soviet Russia were also applied to Armenia. A wave of irresponsibility, adventurism, and antagonism swept the country. Indiscriminate confiscation of properties and wealth was perpetrated by the Bolsheviks and Red Army. Armenia was isolated from the outside world.

On February 18, 1921, the Tashnags rallied their forces and briefly recaptured Erevan, only to yield again to the Soviets on April 2. The Tashnag leaders made a mass exodus from Armenia and took refuge in Middle Eastern and European countries, and subsequently the United States.

In the years to come this change of government was to bring with it new conditions which had a great impact on the Armenians both within Armenia and the diaspora. The effects of the change were felt most acutely in church affairs because of the precarious situation of Ēchmiadzin which often demanded and received more loyalty from the people than did the government. This situation was not to the liking of the Armenian nationalist leaders, especially the Tashnagts'out'iwn who were of the firm belief that the Soviet authorities had control over the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin, using it to influence Armenian public opinion abroad.

At any rate, it became apparent that where the church organization was concerned, partisan interests were present. In this frame of reference, political differences among Armenian communities in America were sharply accentuated, particularly in that era which preceded the assassination of Archbishop Leon Tourian in 1933.

One Tashnag leader has written the following concerning the pholosophy of political organizations: "A prime point of focus of Armenian political consciousness, the Armenian

Church, of necessity, is a prize worth contending for among the political forces within the Armenian communities."[1]

B. Locum-Tenens: Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian (April-July, 1917)

Harout'iwn (baptismal name) Giwlēsērian was born on March 23, 1868 in Aintab, Turkey, into a highly religious family.[2] He received his elementary education at the local Vartanian School until 1888. In 1889 he entered the newly opened Seminary of Armash, Nicomedia, in Turkey, a major center of theological learning and religious revival. Giwlēsērian studied under the tutelage of two eminent hierarchs and former Patriarchs, Archbishops Maghak'ia Ōrmanian and Eghishē Tourian, who exerted profound influence upon the young seminarian. In 1898 he was ordained into the priesthood by Archbishop Ōrmanian who renamed him Papkēn. From the time of his ordination until 1909, Father Giwlēsērian served in several Dioceses in Turkey and was resident preacher in various churches in Constantinople. In 1910 he was elevated to the rank of Bishop.

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[1] Vahe A. Sarafian, "The Soviet and the Armenian Church," The Armenian Review, VIII (June, 1955), p. 84; "Orou Hed Ē Zhoghovourtě," ("With Whom are the People?"), Hairenik, October 14, 1934.

[2] The biographical data concerning Bishop Giwlēsērian is compiled from the following sources: Hai Anteb, IX, (1968). (This is a volume dedicated to Bishop Giwlēsērian in its entirety); Aghawnouni, Miapank' ew Ayts'elouk' Hay Erousaghemi, p. 46.

Bishop Giwlēsērian arrived in New York on October 22, 1914, for medical consultation. From April to July, 1917, he served as Locum-Tenens of the Diocese, an intensely controversial period. On July 29, 1920, he was asked by the Central Executive Committee to serve another term as Locum-Tenens. He remained in this office until the arrival of the new Primate, Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, from Ēchmiadzin on March 7, 1921. On August 7, 1922, Bishop Giwlēsērian left America to examine the plight of Armenian refugees in Middle Eastern countries. He reported his findings to Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia, Patriarch Tourian of Jerusalem, and the Armenian General Benevolent Union of the United States, which came to the assistance of these needy Armenians.[1]

On October 15, 1923, he returned to America and entered into an ecumenical dialogue at Episcopalian headquarters in New York. Bishop Giwlēsērian hoped to secure Episcopalian cooperation for the reorganization of St. James Seminary in Jerusalem. The Episcopalians agreed to appoint one of their clergymen to serve on the teaching staff of the Seminary. In November, 1924, Bishop Giwlēsērian returned to Jerusalem upon the request of Patriarch Tourian to assume his duties as Dean of the Seminary, a post he held until 1930.

In 1930 when the Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia was transferred to Antelias, Lebanon, Catholicos Sahag II Khabaian requested that Archbishop Giwlēsērian become his Coadjutor-Catholicos (one who possesses the full titles and prerogatives of a Catholicos). Archbishop Giwlēsērian received his Catholicosal consecration in Aleppo, Syria, on April 26, 1931. Catholicos Giwlēsērian became actively involved in the educational and religious life of the Seminary in Antelias. Unfortunately his activities came to an early end with his premature death on July 9, 1936.

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[1] Ashod Ergat', "Kerashnorh Papkēn Ebisgobosi Megnoumĕ" ("Departure of His Grace Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian"), *Azk-Bahag*, August 14, 1922.

Catholicos Giwlēsērian was regarded by his contemporaries as an influential scholar, effective preacher, well-informed theologian and church historian, disciplined editor, and energetic organizer and administrator. His literary endeavors include more than twenty-five published works and articles in various periodicals concerning almost every subject in religious literature. Among these are: Hay Egeghets'in E. Tarou Mēch ("The Armenian Church in V Century"); Hay Egeghets'in ("The Armenian Church"); Gensakrout'iwn Tourian Badriarki ("The Biography of Patriarch Eghishē Tourian"); and Badmout'iwn Giligioy Gat'oghigosats' ("History of the Catholicoi of Cilicia").[1]

During his eight years of residency in the United States and during his service as Locum-Tenens of the American Diocese, Bishop Giwlēsērian was unable to exert any extensive influence on the church life and diocesan machinery due to the political instability of the community. His ideas and writings, however, have remained untarnished and are still relevant to the restoration of the Church without endangering her basic features. He was invited by the Diocese to assume the office of Locum-Tenens at a time when the national ecclesiastical life of the Armenians in America was in a tense and deteriorating situation. The Tashnags did not receive him favorably. His ineffectiveness probably stemmed from his own reluctance to involve himself deeply in the political undercurrents of the Diocese. Although he accepted the office of Locum-Tenens, he experienced many days of frustration and bitterness before the schism was healed.

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[1] He has also edited the following periodicals: Loys, Constantinople, 1905-1906; The Taurus, Boston, 1910-1919; Sion, Jerusalem, 1927-1930; and Hask, Antelias, 1931-1936.

1. Maneuverings of the Ex-Primate

To counteract the offenses of his critics, Father Vehouni, the former Primate, issued his "Official Explanation" on February 23, 1917. In it he emphasized that the delegates at the Diocesan Convention on February 18, 1917, were in gross violation of the Constitution and hence their abortive move to have him resign from the Primacy was an illegal procedure, subject to condemnation. Father Vehouni based his arguments on the provisions of Articles 13 and 42 of the Constitution, which provide that the agenda of the Diocesan Convention must be prepared by the Central Executive Committee and that any criticism directed against the Primate must be first reviewed and examined by the Central Executive Committee.[1]

Father Vehouni ought to have been cautious of misinterpretation of Article 13 of the Constitution. It was true that criticism against the Primate should have been sent to the Central Executive Committee for consideration, but it was equally true that the Diocesan Convention, being the supreme governing body of the Church in America, had the authority to deal with this issue concerning the Primacy.[2] It was the prerogative of the Diocesan Convention to discuss matters and issues other than those presented by the Agenda to the Convention. Father Vehouni apparently overlooked Article 30 in the Constitution which read as follows: "It is the duty of the Diocesan Convention to elect Primates or to retire them from office."[3]

Father Vehouni and his collaborators dispatched a report on February 23, 1917, to the Catholicos, informing him of the latest developments. The Central Executive Committee of the Diocesan Convention sent a full report to the Catholicos in which was described in nine points, the criticism raised against the Primate which forced the delegates at the Convention to ask for his resignation for the welfare and benefit of the Diocese. The nine objections pointed toward his ineffectiveness and lack of ability in handling issues such as the problem of unity, the management of the Diocesan treasury, the ineffectiveness of the Religious Council, and his divisive policies.[1] Another charge alleged that the Primate was both crude and offensive, often resorting to harsh and incoherent behavior in a manner unworthy of his office and position.[2]

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[1] Sahmanatrout'iwn, 1903, pp. 10, 15.

[2] V. M. K'iwrk'jian, "Arhachnortagan Khntirě," ("The Problem of the Primacy"), The Gotchnag, March 17, 1917

[3] Sahmanatrout'iwn, 1903, pp. 13-14.

According to the resolution of the Convention, the Central Executive Committee had to elect a new Locum-Tenens within two weeks following the Diocesan Convention. The Central Executive Committee failed to carry out the instructions of the Convention and the executive body of the Convention then invited Father Vartan Kasbarian of Fresno to assume office. However, he declined the offer. Upon his refusal the Central Executive Committee, on April 6, 1917, summoned Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian to become the Locum-Tenens.[3] Bishop Giwlēsērian reluctantly accepted.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk', Worcester, Mass., February 18, 1917, pp. 17-29.

[2] "Amerigahay Khntirner" ("Problems of Armenians of America"), Azk, March 6, 1917.

[3] "Deghabah Dēr Papkēn Srpazani Pats'man Jarhe" ("The Opening Address of Bishop Papkēn"), The Gotchnag, September 1, 1917, p. 1052.

2. Efforts Toward Reconciliation

Bishop Giwlēsērian replied to the Central Executive Committee on April 27, stating that he would make his decision known upon his return from Fresno to Boston.[1] His reluctance stemmed from the fact that only on April 3, 1917, had the Tashnag Party joined the Armenian National Defense Union of America.[2] According to Bishop Giwlēsērian, the difficulties of the ex-Primate were closely connected with the activities of the Union. And the newly recognized organization would have definitely brought a solution to the problem of the Primacy. However, during negotiations between the Defense Union and the Tashnag Party, the Tashnags agreed that the problems of the Primacy were totally an ecclesiastical issue with no bearing whatsoever upon the Union. It had been the contention of Bishop Giwlēsērian, that had he been present during the negotiations, the problem of the Primacy would have already found its logical solution. Furthermore, he contended that since the Armenian Church participated in the Armenian National Defense Union, the problem of the Primacy represented a legitimate issue within the Union.[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 1053.

[2] "Hay Azkayin Miwt'iwnē̌ Gazmouadz" ("The Organized Armenian National Union"), *Azk*, April 6, 1917.

[3] "Deghabah Dēr Papkēn Srpazani Pats'man Jarhē̌," *The Gotchnag*, September 1, 1917, p. 1053.

On June 12, during a meeting with the Central Executive Committee of the Diocesan Convention, Bishop Giwlēsērian accepted the post of Locum-Tenens on a temporary basis. On June 5, he issued his first pastoral letter to the people of the Armenian Church of America, the pastors, and the official bodies of the Diocese and the parishes. The Bishop declared that in all sincerity he had accepted "the ever temporary office of Locum-Tenens, so that, law and order would be restored to the Church without violation of the Constitution."[1]

The pastoral letter was conciliatory in its tone and was intended to provide a common ground upon which to end dissension in the Armenian Church. On July 2, the Locum-Tenens announced the forthcoming Diocesan Convention to be held on July 29, 1917, at Worcester. This was imperative because the ex-Primate and his followers gave no signs of conciliation. A handful of dissident priests, members of the Religious Council, were reluctant to obey the Locum-Tenens, while certain Church Trustees displayed an unwillingness to accept a compromise. The Diocese was gripped by an embarrassing conflict. The Locum-Tenens issued still another pastoral letter on June 30, 1917, intended to generate a genuine spirit of reconciliation and to further the cause of unity.

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[1] Papkēn Giwlēsērian, "Arhachnortout'iwn Hayots' Amerigayi" ("The Primacy of the Armenians of America"), Azk, June 27, 1917.

He pleaded with both lay and clerical members of the Diocese to heed his exhortations and save him from having to adopt a severe policy toward those clergymen who ignored their vows and adhered firmly to their obstinate attitude.

The prime concern of the Bishop had always been the spiritual welfare of the Church. He was determined to defend the Church against the errors of the intransigeant opponents of the Church.

3. Relief Amidst Chaos

The Locum-Tenens presided over the Diocesan Convention which was convened on July 29, 1917, in Worcester. A new Central Executive Committee and Religious Council were elected. The prevailing mood was conciliatory as exemplified by the Locum-Tenens himself. Father Shahē Kasbarian, a delegate from Boston, made a move for reconciliation which was unanimously adopted by the Convention. He proposed the formation of a "Conciliation Committee" to conduct discussions with lay and clerical delegates who were still not cooperative with the new administration.

The delegates were dismayed by the silence maintained by Ēchmiadzin concerning the grim state of ecclesiastical affairs in America. Ēchmiadzin's silence was ascribed to the dark events occurring in the Caucasus due to the Bolshevik Revolution. The "Conciliation Committee" was asked to communicate with the Catholicos and request that he exercise his authority to settle the problems of the Primacy.

One motion concerned the preparation of Armenian priests for service in this country and a committee was formed to work under Bishop Giwlēsērian to investigate possibilities of expediting this matter.[1] The motion was indicative of renewed interest in religious life and a growth in learning, free from the bondage of politics, since most priests shared the ignorance of the immigrants.

The Bishop delivered an address to the Convention inviting the delegates to pursue a new course in conducting the affairs of the Church. He reflected that the credibility of the community had waned. A portion of his address was directed to those persons whose religious priorities were questionable.

> How pleasing it would be if those who do not have faith in the spirituality of the Church would not meddle in its administrative work. This would represent not only a praiseworthy act of modesty on their part, but indeed must be an essential first step in reforming the Armenian Church in America.[2]

At the conclusion of his address, the Locum-Tenens reminded the delegates that he considered his work done; and, as he had agreed previously, he reiterated his desire to be relieved from his duties as Locum-Tenens. The Convention pleaded with him to continue in his post until the election of a new Locum-Tenens. Bishop Giwlēsērian consented.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk', Worcester, Mass., July 29, 1917, p. 51.

[2] "Deghabah Dēr Papkēn Srpazani Pats'man Jarhĕ," The Gotchnag, September 1, 1917, p. 1057.

The dispute between the supporters and opponents of the Locum-Tenens now intensified. It became obvious that Father Vehouni enjoyed the support of the Tashnag Party which was also in power in the government of the Armenian Republic. Bishop Giwlēsērian's sympathies ran contrary to the Tashnags and he received little cooperation from them, rendering his attempts for reconciliation ineffective. It was to be some time before the abuses were to end and the split was to be remedied.

C. Locum-Tenens: Father Shahē Kasbarian (1917-1920)

The Diocesan Convention elected a new Central Council on July 29, 1917. In turn, the Central Council invited Father Shahē Kasbarian, the pastor of Boston, to assume the office of Locum-Tenens. Father Kasbarian, born in 1882, was a native of Ainteb, Turkey. He had completed his religious education at Armash, Turkey, where he was ordained in 1905 by Bishop Maghak'ia Ōrmanian. Father Kasbarian came to America in 1913 and enrolled at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge.[1] He served the Boston parish for seventeen years before he departed in 1930 for the Armenian

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[1] "Grt'agan Garewor Sharzhoum Mĕ Giligioy Mēch" ("An Important Educational Movement in Cilicia"), The Gotchnag, September 6, 1913, p. 877.

Theological Seminary at Antelias, Lebanon, to become the Dean. In 1931 he was elevated to the rank of Bishop.

Father Kasbarian served the Diocese at a time when a former Primate was deliberately provoking a crisis. He stood firmly in defense of the Church and worked untiringly to strengthen the delicate ties between the Diocese and anti-Diocesan parishes. Father Kasbarian was known as a humble man of genuine piety. He vigorously defended his office against great pressures brought upon him by the Tashnag Press which supported the activities of the ex-Primate. Father Kasbarian died on November 24, 1935, while on a visit to Ēchmiadzin.[1]

1. The Transferral of Administration

Bishop Giwlēsērian had resigned from the office of Locum-Tenens during the Diocesan Convention of July 29, 1917. The new Central Executive Committee requested that the Bishop continue its negotiations with the dissenting group. Bishop Giwlēsērian agreed to remain in office in the capacity of "Deputy Locum-Tenens." When negotiations failed, the Central Executive Committee elected Father Shahē Kasbarian as Locum-Tenens until January 27, 1918.[2]

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[1] "Gensakragan Kidzer" ("Biographical Notes"), *Baikar*, December 7, 1935.

[2] "Azkayin Lourer: Amerigayi Hayots' Arhachnortaraně" ("National News: The Diocese of Armenians of America"), *The Taurus*, January 3, 1918, p. 13; *Artsanakrout'iwnk'*, April 7-8, 1918, pp. 104-107.

In the meantime the Central Executive Committee had sent a report on August 25, 1917, to His Holiness in Ēchmiadzin, notifying the Pontiff of the impeachment of Father Arsēn Vehouni. Because of political upheavals, several reports, letters, and telegrams sent to Ēchmiadzin remained unanswered. The general feeling among officials of the Diocese was that Ēchmiadzin was aware of the situation of the Church in America, but preferred to remain silent for reasons of her own.[1] On the other hand, sources from the anti-Diocesan faction reported that normal communication existed between the former Primate and Ēchmiadzin, implying collusion between the Primate and the Pontiff.[2]

A letter dated November 3, 1917, from Ēchmiadzin, addressed to "His Eminence Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian, the Locum-Tenens of the Armenian Diocese of America," reached him on April 9, 1918, when Bishop Kasbarian had already become Locum-Tenens.[3] The letter bore the signature of the chancellor, Bishop Dirayr Hovhannēsian. It contained seven points clearly stating that the resignation of Father Vehouni had been accepted and that the election of Bishop Giwlēsērian had been confirmed. It also instructed Father Vehouni to return all diocesan materials to the Diocese and to cooperate fully with diocesan officials.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk', Worcester, Mass., April 7-8, 1918, p. 111.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., pp. 112-114.

Enclosed in the same envelope was another letter addressed to "Very Reverend Father Arsēn Vehouni, the former Primate of the Armenians of America".[1] This letter also instructed Father Vehouni to return all diocesan belongings and to cooperate fully in this matter. The Central Executive Committee forwarded this letter from the Catholicos to Father Vehouni, but received no reply. Three more letters were sent to him by the Central Executive Committee, but these also remained unanswered. Finally, the ex-Primate responded on May 15, 1918, threatening to convene a separate Diocesan Convention.[2] Father Vehouni and his supporters announced the removal of the Diocese from Worcester to Providence. Every parish was urged to maintain its normal relationship with the Primate who now resided in that city.[3] Some time passed before Father Vehouni was to show a conciliatory attitude to end the long and bitter dispute.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Shrchaperagan Azkayin Arhachnortarani" ("Official Announcement of the National Diocese"), The Taurus, September 26, 1918, p. 625.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Artsanakrout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Minutes of the Central Executive Committee"), Worcester, Mass., October 21, 1918, p. 89.

2. The Suspension of Vehouni

Father Shahē Kasbarian presided over the Diocesan Convention held in Worcester from April 7-8, 1918. Among its deliberations were the revision of the Constitution, organization of a separate Diocese in California, the election of representatives for the Armenian National Union, the recognition of women's suffrage, the eligibility of twenty-one year olds to hold office, the use of organs in the Church, the creation of mixed choirs, and issues pertaining to the cases of the former Primate, the unqualified priests and trustees.[1]

The official letter from Ēchmiadzin was received on April 9, instructing the Diocese to elect a new Primate according to the Constitution. It cautioned the Diocese not to include any candidate on the slate belonging to the Brotherhood of Cilicia.[2] Father Vehouni was notified of the contents of this letter and was instructed to heed the orders of the Catholicos.[3] The Central Executive Committee, receiving no reply, was forced to suspend Father Vehouni from serving in the Diocese.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk', Worcester, Mass., April 7-8, 1918, pp. 91-111.

[2] Shahē Kasbarian, "Bashdōnagan" ("Official Announcement") The Taurus, April 26, 1918, p. 268.

[3] Shahē Kasbarian, "Bashdōnagan" ("Official Announcement") The Taurus, September 26, 1918, p. 625.

Were it not for the Tashnag Party, Father Vehouni would probably have ceased his anti-Diocesan activities and would have obeyed his superiors, both here and in the homeland.[1] A secret partnership, now obvious to all, had formed between Father Vehouni and the Tashnag Party whose sympathies for the ex-Primate were not necessarily genuine.[2]

D. Tashnag Attempts to Dominate the Church

With the Tashnag Party in power in Armenia, the American branch of that organization displayed an air of professed religiosity after decades of anti-religious hostility. In Armenia they established a secular anti-Church government. The Tashnag Party challenged the authority of the Catholicos and utilized every means to renounce the Church. The American Central Committee of the Tashnag Party, long known for its fanaticism, almost overnight became the champion of faith, especially in defense of Father Vehouni. Bishop Giwlēsērian noted that for some time the Central Committee of the Tashnag Party in America was not seriously interested in the Armenian Church in America except to exercise control over the Diocese. He emphasized that the leadership of the Tashnag Party in America was determined more than ever to have the Primacy under its direct influence and to administer the affairs of the Diocese according to political party lines. One indication of this was their insistence that representatives of the Armenian Church in the Armenian National Union be persons with Tashnag sympathies.[1]

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[1] "Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'in Amerigayi Mēch" ("The Armenian Church in America"), The Taurus, November 28, 1918, p. 763.

[2] Ibid.

The Tashnag Party further encouraged Father Vehouni in his attempt to convene a dissident Diocesan Convention in Providence on October 20, 1918. Only a handful of delegates participated, later joined by a few clerics, long known for their troublesome characters and negative personalities. At this Convention Father Vehouni repudiated the Locum-Tenens, the Diocese, and the legal Diocesan Convention. The delegates refused to consider his resignation as Primate. They instructed their Central Executive Committee to inform the parishes to communicate with Primate Vehouni who now had his headquarters in Providence, a stronghold of the Tashnag Party.[2] The dissident Central Executive Committee appealed several times to the Armenian National Union, stressing that they represented the legal authority of the Diocese and must participate in the meetings of the Union. They were refused each time, much to the regret of the Tashnag Party.[3] Then the dissident Central Executive Committee passed a resolution wherein they refused to recognize the validity of the Armenian National Union.[1]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Artsanakrout'iwn," October 21, 1918, p. 89.

[3] Ibid., November 26, 1918, p. 92.

Thus the Tashnag Party which had previously made slanderous statements against Father Vehouni, now defended him against the lawful administration of the Diocese. Bishop Giwlēsērian held Father Vehouni solely responsible for the crisis in the Church and condemned him for willingly aiding the ambitious schemes of the Tashnag Party, which became solicitous toward the Church and used every means to infiltrate all administrative posts of that organization.[2]

E. Quest for Ecclesiastical Unity

World War I ended with the Armistice of November 11, 1918. On January 18, 1919 a Peace Conference assembled in Paris. A gradual normalization of trans-world communication systems improved Ēchmiadzin's information on events in the United States. Reports from the Diocese necessitated the dispatch of a Plenipotentiary from Ēchmiadzin to America to unite the Church and community. Catholicos Kēork V designated Bishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian of the Diocese of Ararat in

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[1] *Ibid.*, April 8, 1919, p. 95.

[2] "Nakhort Arhachnort Arsēn Vrt. Vehounii Norakoyn Shahadagout'iwnnerě" ("The Newest Exploitations of the Former Primate, Father Arsēn Vehouni"), *The Taurus*, June 2, 1919, p. 390.

Armenia for the mission.[1] Much to the relief of the Catholicos and the Armenians of America, the controversy surrounding the ex-Primate was solved, and with it, the schism was brought to an end. A new Primate was elected. The long road of recovery had begun. Not surprisingly, the days of remorse for the Church were not completely over.

1. Arrival of the Plenipotentiary: Bishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian, May 13, 1920

The abilities of Bishop Mouradpēgian were more of an administrative nature than scholastic. He was a man of strong will, deep insight, and a spirit of sacrifice. He was born in Tiflis, Georgia, in 1873, and entered the sacred priesthood in 1901. In 1932 he became the Catholicos of All-Armenians and died on April 6, 1938.[2] The circumstances of his death were obscure.

As the Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos, Bishop Mouradpēgian arrived in America on May 13, 1920. He was met in New York by two rival trustees of the New York Church, one delegation headed by Bishop Giwlēsērian, the other by Father

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[1] Bishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian, "Hrawirakir: Amerigayi Hayasdaneayts' Arhak'elagan Sp. Egeghets'woy Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovoy" ("Invitation to the Diocesan Convention of the Armenian Apostolic Church"), The Gotchnag, June 26, 1920, p. 826.

[2] Editorial, "Gensakragan Nōt'er" ("Biographical Notes"), Sion, XII (May, 1938), p. 134.

Vehouni.[1] The Bishop was escorted to the headquarters of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic where he was received cordially by the officials. On May 23, 1920, a banquet was tendered in his honor at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. The Bishop spoke to those assembled of events in Armenia which gave birth to freedom near Ararat and subsequently to the Independent Armenian Republic.[2]

On the following day Bishop Mouradpēgian presided at religious services in St. Illuminator Church in New York. The Church was filled to capacity. In his sermon, the Bishop praised the Armenian immigrants for their genuine patriotism and generosity but expressed regret over the division in the Armenian community and the schism in the Church. His exhortation to the congregation was that they needed the spirit of love, forgiveness, and cooperation.[3]

2. The End of Schism

Bishop Mouradpēgian resided in New York during his stay in America. Details of his sojourn and private talks with individuals and organizations are unavailable. Even the Armenian press was silent concerning his mission and itinerary.

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[1] "Hay Kaght'aganout'iwnĕ" ("The Armenian Colony"), The Gotchnag, May 15, 1920, p. 667.

[2] Bishop Giwlēsērian was not present but Father Vehouni was. The remainder of the guests at the head table were all of Tashnag inclination. "Hay Kaght'aganout'iwnĕ" ("The Armenian Colony"), The Gotchnag, May 29, 1920, p. 713.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 712.

However, it was clear from the outset that he was surrounded by Tashnag elements, a situation not to the liking of Diocesan authorities.

As part of an official invitation, Bishop Mouradpēgian informed the public and Diocesan delegates of the forthcoming Convention to be held on July 10, 1920, in Worcester.[1] Several points of the invitation, cited below, were indicative of the course to be pursued by the Bishop. There was no mention of the Diocesan Convention of February, 1918, which deposed Father Vehouni from office as Primate. Instead, it stated that upon the insistence of Father Vehouni, the Catholicos had consented to his resignation. Bishop Mouradpēgian added that because of world strife, normal communications between the Holy See and the outside world were severed, thereby making it impossible for Ēchmiadzin to be kept informed of events in the United States. It became clear that the Holy See had been unaware of the developments concerning the Diocesan difficulties and the appointment of Father Shahē Kasbarian to the office of Locum-Tenens. Since no confirmation had come from the Catholicos to Father Kasbarian, Bishop Giwlēsērian remained the legitimate Locum-Tenens, sanctioned by his Holiness on November 3, 1917.

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[1] Khorēn Mouradpēgian, "Hrawirakir" ("Invitation"), The Gotchnag, June 19, 1920, p. 827.

If this way of reasoning seemed to be justified, on the other hand, it pointed out the fact that the Diocesan Convention of July 29, 1917, which elected Father Kasbarian as Locum-Tenens, was not constitutional. The invitation also alluded to the Diocesan Convention called by the ex-Primate which pleaded with the Catholicos to intervene in order that Father Vehouni might continue his duties as Primate. The Diocesan Convention had one major item on the agenda: to elect a new Primate. The Convention was preceded by negotiations between the Plenipotentiary and the interested parties. Father Vehouni had made his intentions clear, that he would like to be relieved from all his responsibilities and to depart from this country.[1] Bishop Mouradpēgian consulted with the two rival Central Executive Committees and ordered July 10-11 as the dates for the Diocesan Convention. That Convention unanimously elected Bishop Dirayr Hovhannēsian, the Chancellor of Ēchmiadzin, as the new Primate. A new Central Executive Committee was also formed.

During the Convention Bishop Mouradpēgian declared that the Diocesan Convention of February 17, 1917, was in error on several counts in their attempts to depose the Primate. On the other hand, Father Vehouni was also in error by clinging to the office of the Primacy. Bishop Mouradpēgian also asserted that the dissident Diocese in Providence had ceased to exist. To the satisfaction of the Tashnag Party the Convention decided that the representatives of the Diocese must discontinue their participation in the Armenian National Union. The editor of The Gotchnag charged Bishop Mouradpēgian with partiality in yielding to the demands of the Tashnags who earnestly supported Father Vehouni. A possible explanation for the Bishop's compromising attitude may be ascribed to the fact that the Tashnags were in charge of the government in Armenia.[1]

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[1] Khorēn Mouradpēgian, "Amerigayi T'emin," ("Letter to the Diocese of America"), The Gotchnag, September 4, 1920, p. 1152.

On July 29 the new Central Executive Committee, under the presidency of the Plenipotentiary, designated Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian as the Locum-Tenens until the arrival of the new Primate.[2] The era of a dual or rival Primacy came to an end. Once again, one Diocese and one Central Executive Committee were in charge of a flock divided by political and factional reasons. Father Vehouni, who had yielded under the pressures of the Plenipotentiary, was repentant and anxious to get back in good standing. He led the way for other priests to return to the legitimate fold. Those who had supported the separatists were also absolved as dissension seemed to be dying out in all the parishes, only to be renewed in the thirties, thrusting the community churches into the fiercest ecclesiastical storm of their history.

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[1] Editorial, "Amerigayi Hay Egeghets'in Ew Cat'oghigosagan Liazōrě" ("The Armenian Church of America and the Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos"), The Gotchnag, August 6, 1920, pp. 1007-1009.

[2] Mouradpēgian, "Amerigayi T'emin," The Gotchnag, September 4, 1920, p. 1152.

3. Epilogue

On August 10, 1920, the Plenipotentiary departed for Armenia. He had successfully completed his mission. He carried with him a very important document for Catholicos Keōrk V. The report, prepared by Bishop Giwlēsērian, dealt in depth with the Armenian community in America and the role of the Armenian Church. The purpose of that study was to invite the Catholicos to consider seriously regulating the spiritual and administrative life of the Church in order that she might become an effective institution. Some of his thoughts concerning the Diocesan structure and clergy were as follows:

> The Primacy of the United States is not an efficacious issue, since that to which we refer to as the Primacy of America, in truth does not exist within the context of the Church as it is known in Eastern and Western Armenia. Moreover, that which is alluded to as the Primacy, is a deficient organization, which from its inception has been an object of exploitation at the hands of irresponsible clergymen, as well as the victim of political intrigues and factional speculations. And the Church has consistently emerged in the midst of controversy.[1]

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[1] V.N. Giwlēsērian, "Papkēn Ebisgobos Amerigayi Mēch" (Bishop Papkēn in America"), Hai Anteb, IX (1968), 63-64.

Bishop Giwlēsērian added that sooner or later the Armenian community would be assimilated into the American culture and society. As he saw it, assimilation is practically inevitable in this country, although no government restriction is forced upon the religious faith or practices of any immigrant or ethnic group. He further commented that although the prevailing religious character of this country was Protestant, as such, it was a liberal Protestantism and not to be feared. The Armenian Church, by virtue of her centuries-old mission as the major stronghold outside the homeland, must, however, achieve a degree of efficiency and order by which to fulfill her mission and adapt to the conditions of this land.[1]

To achieve a religious and ecclesiastical renaissance, Bishop Giwlēsērian mentioned three points which warranted immediate consideration.

> 1. Without exception each Armenian colony must establish a parish with its own Church building and administration.
>
> 2. The clergy who are to serve in the Armenian Churches in America must first receive their secular and religious training in American institutions.
>
> 3. The liturgical and ceremonial structure of the Armenian Church must be officially adapted to the spiritual and economic circumstances of the Armenians in America.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[2] On January 5, 1918, Bishop Giwlēsērian and a handful of well-known Armenians of New York, formed the Armenian Theological Student's Aid Committee to have Armenian candidates for the priesthood study at Union Theological Seminary

Bishop Giwlēsērian concluded his observations with the suggestion that

> ... it is expedient that a new structure with broad jurisdictional prerogatives be instituted for the Armenian Church in America, as for instance, one similar to the structure of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in order that the Armenians in America shall be enabled to govern their church in accordance with the requirements of this country (America) and the immediate needs and demands of the people.[1]

Now, fifty years later, the prophetic report of Bishop Giwlēsērian becomes relevant. The issues to be dealt with and the problems he mentioned are still plaguing the Armenian Church. His approach, his thinking, and his presentations of matters problematic to the Church were clear and concise. It was the contention of Bishop Giwlēsērian that the tradition of the East must be tempered by the pragmatism of the West.

"Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn ew Goch'" ("Official Announcement and Notice"), The Taurus, January 10, 1918, p. 27. It was unfortunate that not one student showed any interest in this appeal.

[1] Giwlēsērian, "Papkēn Egisgobos Amerigayi Mēch," Hai Anteb, IX (1968), 71.

F. Expansion of Churches

The years from 1917 to 1921 were turbulent ones for the Diocese. Internal problems within the Church occupied people's minds as did the fate of the Armenian homeland. Thus this period witnessed the acquisition of only one church, the Saint Sahag and Saint Mesrob Church in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Armenians settled in Pennsylvania as early as the 1850s. During the Civil War, names of Armenians who fought in the Union Army can be found, as well as the names of laborers who worked at the arsenal in Philadelphia. Several physicians are also listed, namely Garabed Kalousdian, Baronig Madtēosian, and Simon Minasian, surgeon at the Pennsylvania Hospital.[1] One physician, Mihran Kasabian, is mentioned by Archbishop Seropian in 1912 as the author of a study entitled, "The Seventy-Five Years of Activity of Armenians in America."[2]

By 1890 immigrants were attracted to Philadelphia which provided jobs in industrial firms. The religious life of the community began in the early years of 1900. It was not uncommon to find Armenians of both orthodox and Protestant persuasion worshipping together in a Protestant Church.[1] The Primate would occassionally visit the parish as would the pastor from the community of West Hoboken, New Jersey. Services were held in a Protestant Episcopal Church on 5th and Buttenwood Streets. In 1901 Archbishop Sarajian appointed a temporary five-member Board of Church Trustees who were later officially installed in office during the first Membership Meeting of the parish presided over by Father Masht'ots' P'ap'azian, in October, 1902.[2]

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[1] Ananigian, "Amerigahay Ousanoghout'iwnĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1912, pp. 83-93.

[2] No specific data is available concerning Kasabian's years of work or the years he lived. The manuscript of the study is said to be in the possession of his wife. Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghoutĕ ew ir Dzakoumnerĕ," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*, 1912, pp. 13-14.

With the growth of the Armenian community in Philadelphia in 1913, the need for a church became obvious. A small church on the corner of Pike and Broad Streets was purchased for $18,000 in 1913.[3]

On March 21, 1917, the Armenians bought a new church located on Pine Street for $12,000. The church was consecrated by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian on September 30, 1917.

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[1] Fiftieth Anniversary, St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, October 15, 1967.

[2] S.S. Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Church of Philadelphia, 1917-1952, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 23, 1952.

[3] The data and figures for the purchase of the church differ in sources. Consecration, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, November 24, 1963, p. 25; Ashjian, p. 109; Fiftieth Anniversary, St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, October 15, 1967, all list 1913 as the year of purchase and $18,000 as the purchase price. S.S. Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Church of Philadelphia, 1917-1952, cites March 21, 1917, as the purchase date and the price as $12,000.

Hovhannēs T'ēmōyian served as Godfather. The Church was named St. Sahag and St. Mesrob. Due to the influx of Armenian immigrants into the community and because of the widely scattered areas outlying Philadelphia, it became apparent that the services of one church were not sufficient. It was decided to maintain two parishes--one in West Philadelphia and the other in North Philadelphia.

In September, 1923, the Membership Meeting finalized the separation.[1] One month later the church was sold for $30,000. During the interim between the sale of the Church and the acquisition of the new one (1923-1925), the community of West Philadelphia held church services in St. George's Episcopal Church at 61st and Hazel Avenue.[2]

On July 22, 1925, the West Philadelphians approved the purchase of a large house at Walnut Street with adjacent lot for $42,000. The North Philadelphians became discontent with the acquisition of the building and claimed $15,000 as their share from the sale of the Church in 1923.[3] Thus the Church in West Philadelphia came to be regarded as the continuation of the original Church in Philadelphia and maintained the name of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob.[1] However, the years of the Depression prevented the community from carrying out their plans for converting the house into a church. Instead, the second floor was converted into a chapel and the first floor was used as a hall. The chapel was consecrated in 1932 by Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian. In 1939 the West Philadelphians again undertook plans for a Church. A Building Committee was appointed by the Membership Meeting. In 1947 a parcel of land on the corner of 63rd and Locust Streets was bought for $38,000. In September 1950, the Walnut Street Church was sold for $30,000. A new church building in the traditional Armenian architecture was proposed by the building committee. However, high costs and limited supplies of building materials altered their plans. As an interim measure, the building of a large hall was planned in which services could be held and which would later serve as a community hall.

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[1] Consecration, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, November 24, 1963, p. 24.

[2] By a similar arrangement the North Philadelphians were allowed use of the Episcopal Church on 18th and Diamond and 12th and Diamond Streets.

[3] Consecration and Dedication, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cheltenham, Pa., September 13, 1966.

On December 9, 1951, Archbishop Diran Nersoyian, the Primate, blessed the cornerstone of the newly conpleted church hall. For the next ten years church services were held there. As the community grew into the western suburbs, the original plans for building a church on Locust Street were abandoned. A new site for a permanent church on Clothier Road in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, was ratified at the Church

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[1] The North Philadelphians bought their church, Saint Gregory the Illuminator, in 1927.

Trustees Meeting on February 19, 1961. The Building Committee purchased the Agnes Irwin School for Girls on eight and one-half acres of land. The settlement was completed on August 1, 1968.[1] Extensive renovations were made resulting in a new church edifice, auditorium, classrooms, and other facilities to serve the religious, cultural, and social needs of the Armenian community. The Church was consecrated on November 24, 1963, by Primate Archbishop Sion Manougian.

G. Summary and Conclusion

As the war gradually ground to a halt there was some expectation that the trauma of the war years would pass and the Armenian Church would emerge with renewed vigor to pursue her mission. What was necessary was sound leadership, something the Armenian Church had lacked pretty consistently in previous years. In 1917, however, it so happened that a suitable leader was available in the person of Bishop Giwlēsērian--a highly gifted cleric and an accomplished man of letters.

Despite initial reluctance to serve, the Bishop consented to being drafted as temporary Locum-Tenens and proceeded to heal the *de facto* "schism" which had developed under the previous primate. His efforts were only partly successful since the Tashnags and Father Vehouni once again became adamant upon the entrenchment of Tashnag power in the Armenian Republic in 1918. Under the circumstances, Bishop Giwlēsērian resigned as Locum-Tenens and the Church in America lost one of her most devoted and able leaders. His relacement, Father Kasbarian, was also an able cleric. But because of the ongoing inter-party conflict, his attempts at unity were also unsuccessful. The church community had reached an impasse. Clearly a supreme effort was necessary to break the deadlock.

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[1] *Consecration*, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, November 24, 1963, pp. 22-23.

As it turned out, no less than external intervention by the Holy See could deal with the critical situation. The Catholicos was forced to dispatch Bishop Mouradpēgian as Plenipotentiary in 1920. Bishop Mouradpēgian finally succeeded in bringing in the Tashnag faction under ex-Primate Vehouni, thereby reconciling the two sides. He also presided over the election of a new Primate, Bishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, who had been the Chancellor of the Holy See. It was significant that the actions of the Plenipotentiary betrayed a muted pro-Tashnag bias reflecting the power realities in the Armenian Republic. Ironically, in later years this bias would be reversed with the overthrow of the Tashnag-led government and the subsequent sovietization of the country in 1920 which once again increased the chances of communal conflict in America.

CHAPTER VIII

TRADITIONALISM VS. LIBERALISM

(1921-1928)

The primacy of Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian marked a turning point in the history of the Armenian Church in America since her establishment as a Diocese in 1898. This change should be viewed as a modest beginning toward the realization of the Church's vital role in a Western setting. Unfortunately, the internecine strife of rival political factions which had plagued the Church did not disappear overnight. The controversies continued with renewed vigor. The secular orientation of political factions often made the Church and clergy a favorite target for their continual attacks, with the intent of reducing the effectiveness of the Church in the community.

Despite these obstacles, the primacy of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian ushered in an era of relatively new accomplishments in the Diocese. The Primate was a man of scholarly interests and a vigorous defender of age-old ecclesiastical traditions, who observed strict law and order as a basis for stability in the Church. During this period, ten new churches came into existence, bringing the number of churches in the Eastern and Western Diocese to nineteen. The first

American-born generation, now in their twenties and thirties, called for a more Americanized church structure. Increasing numbers of the American-born were unwilling to share their parents' sense of identity with their cultural and spiritual heritage. During this period two major administrative developments took place--the transferral of the Diocese in 1923 to Boston from Worcester, and then to New York; and the creation of a Western Diocese in California in 1927.

Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian strove to strengthen the central authority of the Church in America through a policy aimed at unity, discipline, efficiency, and financial solvency. From the outset certain parishes such as New York, Boston, and Los Angeles had pursued a course somewhat independent from the Diocese, achieving a near state of local autonomy. They were most reluctant to relinquish any flexibility they had obtained.

Again, the seemingly incurable diseases of dissension, disorder, and controversy plagued the Church, making it difficult for the new Primate to implement fully his major policies for general renewal in the Church. In the face of growing discontent and disfavor with the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese and various parish church officials, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian resigned as Primate in 1928. Although he was challenged for his uncompromising attitude, his tenure in office was marked by significant advances in the expansion of churches and formation of church organizations. The Archbishop, disillusioned and frustrated, now withdrew from the Diocesan scene and sought refuge in intellectual endeavors. The Church in America was rent once again.

A. Historical Background

The early twenties were eventful years for Armenians both in the homeland and in the diaspora. The Armenian colony in America, more than any other, became totally involved in the socio-political conflicts of the homeland, and, in a surge of Armenian patriotism, expressed its desire to remedy the traumatic sorrow of its brethren.

Political activities in the Armenian-American community developed against this background. Partisan issues increasingly began to dominate the Church and to obstruct her purely religious and spiritual progress, setting the stage for the darkest chapter in the history of the Armenian Church in the United States.

Until 1920, the political mind and national aspirations of the Armenian political organizations were preoccupied with revolutionary activities and were directed against a common and external enemy--the Turk. After the fall of the Armenian Republic in 1920 to the Soviet regime, the relationship between the Hnch'ag Party and the Tashnag Party deteriorated because the Hnch'ags supported fully the ideology of Communism and preferred a Sovietized Armenia to an independent republic under Tashnag rule. The Rhamgavar Party adapted to conservative policy. While it categorically denounced Communism and Tashnag socialism on the basis that the Independent Republic was not representative of all Armenians, it asserted that Soviet Armenia was the hope of the Armenian people despite its Communist government. The Tashnag Party was determined to prevent the permeation of Communist ideology into Armenian communities in America.

On November 29, 1920, the northern sectors of Armenia were occupied by the Red Army. On December 2, the Tashnag government of Armenia resigned and was replaced by a coalition government, establishing a Russian-dominated Socialist Republic. On December 21 of the same year, all laws pertaining to Soviet Russia were enforced in Armenia.[1] Two months later, on February 18, 1921, because of the severity of Soviet rule, the Tashnags staged an insurrection and recaptured Erevan, the capital city, which they held until April 2 when the Soviets completely banished the Tashnag leadership from Armenia.[2] The entire cabinet of the government took refuge in neighboring Persia, anticipating a possible return to Armenia under more favorable political circumstances. The exiled government leaders eventually abandoned all hope of return and dispersed into Egypt, France, America, and other parts of the world. Here they continued their political activities with intensified zeal, fractionating the communities and ushering in the most tragic period of religious and national dissension, schism, hatred and internal convulsion in the history of the Armenian nation, which continues to this day.

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[1] Vratzian, "How Armenia was Sovietized," *Armenian Review* (Winter, 1948), I, 89-90; Oliver Baldwin, *Six Prisons and Two Revolutions* (New York: Doubleday-Page and Co., 1925), pp. 31-32 ; Armēn Bardizian, *Hay Egeghets'woy Daknabě* ("The Crisis of the Armenian Church") (Boston: Hairenik Press, 1936).

[2] Lazian, Hayasdan ew Hay Tadĕ, pp. 295-304.

Before the end of the decade, partisan conflicts claimed the lives of numerous innocent victims, disrupting the Armenian communities in dispersion. Party presses, with their incessant and vitriolic attacks, often made the Church and clergy their target. America became one of the major centers for Armenian factional feuding, usually involving the Church.

A second misfortune that beset the Armenians was their mass deportation from Cilicia, a region in southern Turkey, by order of France on September 4, 1921. A treaty signed by France and Kemalist Turkey on October 21, 1921, cast hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees into foreign countries throughout the Middle East, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere.[1] Many sought entry into America.

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[1] Editorial, "Giligioy Khntirě, ("The Problem of Cilicia"), *Azk-Bahag*, February 9, 1922.

Sahag II Khabayian (1903-1921 in Cilicia and 1930-1939 in Antelias), the Catholicos of Cilicia, also preferred escape from the city to the fury and reprisals of the Kemalist Turks. For the next nine years, he wandered from one city to another in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, finally establishing the Catholicate of Cilicia in 1930 in a small village, Antelias, seven miles north of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. The Armenians of America offered their aid by forming auxiliary committees which provided financial support to the Catholicate for the training of seminarians. It was hoped that priests to be trained there would serve parishes in the United States.

The debacle of 1921 was followed by a third and more disastrous disillusionment when, during the Lausanne Conference, on July 24, 1923, the Allied Nations made major concessions to Turkey at the expense of her Christian minorities. Hence the European powers again chose to bury the Armenian Question. The name "Armenia" did not even appear in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923.[1]

A fourth misfortune for the Armenians was a tightening of immigration laws of America by the National Origins Act of 1924.

In spite of all these political, religious, and economic hardships, the Armenians managed to survive, improve their conditions, and achieve some economic stability in the countries to which they migrated. Aid and rehabilitation were provided to many of the less fortunate migrants by the Armenians of the United States. Individuals, churches, and organizations contributed most generously to their cause. Among these were the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Relief Committee of America, and the United States government-sponsored Near East Relief.[1]

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[1] Lazian, pp. 317-322; DeNovo, pp. 128-166.

In America not only were the Armenian secular organizations preoccupied with these political developments, but the Church herself became deeply embroiled, almost to the exclusion of her spiritual ministry. Even more detrimental were the warring political factions which used the Church as an arena in which to settle their differences. Compounded with these difficulties was the growing concern of the Armenians in the United States over the precarious situation of the Mother Church in the homeland which had fallen under Soviet domination.[2]

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[1] DeNovo, pp. 102-103; Armenian Relief Committee of America, "Goch' Amerigahayerou" ("Appeal to the Armenians of America"), Hairenik, December 28, 1921.

[2] So widespread and intense was the patriotic feeling that the Armenian language papers hardly reported any news of the Church and religion, thereby limiting available material on this subject. Whenever such items did appear, they were biased and tinted with factional overtones.

B. Ēchmiadzin Under Soviet Rule (1921-1928)

The Soviet government issued a decree on the separation of Church and State on February 5, 1918, when Orthodox Church possessions were confiscated and declared state property in Russia.[1] With the establishment of Soviet rule in Armenia in 1920, the Armenian Church was faced with the dilemma of existing under an atheistic and totalitarian government. Initially the Soviets hesitated in Armenia to attempt the total curtailment of the authority of Ēchmiadzin and the destruction of the Church through the confiscation of her properties. This was due largely to the fact that Soviet authorities were cautious about the strong religious sentiments of the vast majority of the population. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks eventually carried out their plan of seizure of ecclesiastical properties despite the pleas and protests of the aging Catholicos, Kēork V.[2]

After the new regime was established, the Synod of Ēchmiadzin, composed of six bishops, met for a series of conferences. It was deemed necessary in July, 1921, however, to include other high-ranking Armenian churchmen in the deliberations in order to adopt a unified position toward the policies of the Soviet regime. The general mood of the Synod, faced with inevitable political control, was to cooperate with the government and to cement the relationship between Ēchmiadzin and the Soviets. Thereafter the Catholicos issued an encyclical exhorting the faithful to support and assist the local Soviet authorities in their rebuilding of the communities.[1]

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[1] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 155.

[2] Editorial, "Ēchmiadzni Vijagě" ("The Situation of Echmiadzin"), *The Gotchnag*, January 29, 1921, p. 199.

In spite of Soviet harassment of the Church, the Catholicos continued with attempts at reform, a policy he had been pursuing since his election in 1912. Beginning in 1920, successive Pontifical encyclicals effected changes: the number of days whereupon the sacrament of marriage could be conferred was increased; remarriage of secular priests was permitted; the canon of kinship in marriage was reduced to the fifth state; the Gregorian Calendar was adopted; and the use of organs in churches was permitted.[2] On November 24, 1923, the Catholicos formed a Central Committee for the Reformation of the Armenian Church at Ēchmiadzin. This Committee was delegated to compile the viewpoints of the Catholicate of Cilicia and the Armenian Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople, as well as other religious and lay leaders, in preparation for a National Ecclesiastical Conference. This conference, however, never materialized because Soviet authorities restricted its convocation. It was unfortunate that the spirit of reformation, however superficial, received a lethal blow at the hands of the Soviets who intended to reduce the Armenian Church to a position whereby she would cease to be the traditional guide for the nation.[1]

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[1] "Hayrabedagan Gontag Hayasdani Zhoghovourtin" ("Pontifical Bull to the People of Armenia"), *The Gotchnag*, January 16, 1921, p. 962.

[2] Bardizian, *Hay Egeghets'woy Daknabě*, p. 71.

It was not until 1922 that the Soviet decree on the separation of Church and State was implemented in Armenia.[2] By this decree, the Church's claim of universality and unity and the hierarchical authority of the Church were dissolved de facto within the borders of Armenia. Ēchmiadzin was denied the right of exercising direct spiritual authority upon the Dioceses and parish churches in Armenia. Instead, the faithful were allowed to congregate only in local religious groups, not to exceed more than twenty members. These religious groups were not permitted to associate with one another or to organize on a Diocesan level. In 1922 the government's attitude toward the Church was given administrative form by the creation of the Council for Affairs of the Armenian Church as an adjunct to the Council of People's Commissars. In 1924, the Synod of Ēchmiadzin, the supreme body of the Church, was dissolved and replaced by the Supreme Spiritual Council as the Executive Body. It initially consisted only of high-ranking clergymen, but later laymen also participated. The National Ecclesiastical Assembly was declared to be the legislative body.

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[1] Walter Kolarz, Religion in the Soviet Union (New York; St. Martins Press, 1961), p. 154.

[2] Bardizian, Hay Egeghets'woy Daknabĕ, p. 71.

Despite these outward changes, the relationship of Ēchmiadzin and the government remained in a state of constant tension. In its intimidation of the Church, the government engaged in and encouraged vociferous anti-religious propaganda paving the way for a church revolution to be incited by the insurgents of the Communist-inspired "Living Church" movement.[1]

In order to disintegrate the Church from within, the Communists ardently supported a new group which called itself the "Free Church" or "Reformed Church." This movement, which bore a semblance to the "Living Church" of the Russian Orthodox Church, was founded in Armenia in 1922, with the sponsorship of the Cheka.[2] It received full-fledged encouragement from Soviet authorities in its attempts to minimize and discredit the authority and hierarchy of the central church administration. The leaders of the "Free Church" in Armenia were several former clergymen, significant among them Ashod

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[1] Walter Kolarz, p. 154; Mary Kilbourne Matossian, The Impact of Soviet Policies in Armenia (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), pp. 92-93.

[2] Bardizian, Hay Egeghets'woy Daknabĕ, p. 9.

Shakhian, Penig Vartabed, Erouant Mangouni, and Mesrob Melian.[1] They published a magazine called *Azad Egeghets'i* ("Free Church"), wherein they proposed an ambitious program for the reorganization of the Church.

In its early years, the "Free Church" movement received support from liberal-minded priests and bishops, both at home and abroad. The Catholicos, however, emphatically denounced its policies, forbidding any innovations in the Armenian Church under threat of severe penalty.[2] Among the leaders of the "Free Church" movement, the former Archbishop Ashod Shakhian, the Primate of Leninagan in Armenia, published a brochure in 1924 in Armenian entitled, *Degenerate Religion*, in which he criticized the hierarchy of the Armenian Church for its failure to provide proper administration and supervision of the religious life of the faithful. This work aroused much conflict among both religious and lay members of the Church who demanded the Archbishop's immediate removal from office. The Archbishop later revealed in an interview to the *Khorhrtayin Hayasdan* newspaper that more publications would be forthcoming with the intent of orienting people to the exact nature of the goals of the "Free Church."[3]

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[1] Bardizian, pp. 77-78. Erouant Mangouni later became the editor of a periodical, *Anasdouadz* ("The Godless").

[2] S. G. Mat'osian, "Hay Arhak'. Egeghets'woy Daknabĕ" ("The Crisis of the Armenian Apostolic Church"), *The Pharos*, II, (March, 1928), p. 56.

[3] Armenda, "Hay Egeghets'in Hayasdani Mēch"("The Church in Armenia"), *Baikar*, October 1, 1924.

A colleague of the Archbishop was Penig Vartabed who, in 1924, authored two pamphlets repudiating the Mother See of Ēchmiadzin. These were entitled The Plundered Monastery and Celibacy Is Prodigality - Superstition Is Not Christianity.

Continuous provocations by the "Free Church" advocates incurred not only the criticism of Ēchmiadzin, but eventually their defrocking by order of the Catholicos.[1]

Unaware of the true intentions of this group, several clergymen as well as columnists of Armenian language newspapers in America, such as The Gotchnag and Baikar, supported and encouraged the "Free Church" movement. One such proponent of the movement was Father Shahē Kasbarian, the former Locum-Tenens. An article by him entitled "Strengthen the Struggle," appeared in the October, 1925, issue of the Azad Egeghets'i.[2] Father Kasbarian was strongly critical of the Supreme Spiritual Council at Ēchmiadzin for its administrative inefficiency and its reluctance to implement much-needed reforms in the Church.[3] Despite the criticism of the "Free Church" levelled against Ēchmiadzin, the vast majority of Armenians, both in the homeland and in the diaspora, and the Armenian Church hierarchy in almost its entirety, supported the Catholicos in his repudiation of the "Free Church."

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[1] Armenag Nazar, "Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy Paregarkout'iwn'ē" ("The Reformation of the Armenian Church"), Baikar, October 22, 1924.

[2] Shahē Kasbarian, "Baykarė Zorats'outs'ēk'" ("Strengthen the Struggle"), Azad Egeghets'i, October, 1925.

[3] Bardizian, p. 80. Armēn Bardizian is of the opinion that Father Kasbarian's article was meant to intimidate Ēchmiadzin for the defeat it experienced in 1921 with the election of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian.

It was in testimony to this sentiment that, at the Diocesan Convention of 1927 in Worcester, several delegates favored taking punitive action against Father Kasbarian. Following a heated discussion, a motion by Maghak' Bērbērian of West Pullman, Illinois, was offered expressing the view that the "Free Church" movement was detrimental to the central ecclesiastical authority in Ēchmiadzin and therefore ought to be condemned. He further urged that the Catholicos be given filial obedience and unanimous support in his condemnation of this movement.[1] The motion was passed.

The "Free Church" movement proved to be of short duration. Many of its followers in Armenia soon realized its true nature and ceased to support it. Soviet authorities also lost interest in the movement since it proved ineffective in its attempts to weaken the Church. Deprived of government encouragement after 1926, the movement ceased to have any importance as a source of anti-religious propaganda. With the dissolution of the "Free Church," the anti-religious campaign of the Soviets entered a new phase. A new movement sponsored by the government, termed the "League of the Militant Godless," systematically conducted its propaganda to weaken the Church establishment from without.

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[1] Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Adenakrout'iwnner, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp. 21-22.

An examination of the anti-Ēchmiadzin policy of the Soviets reveals that two forces were at work. The radical viewpoint advocated the immediate liquidation of Ēchmiadzin; the second viewpoint, although sharing this basic hope, differed in its methods of execution, favoring the death of religion and Ēchmiadzin through gradual and natural means rather than by violence.[1]

Catholicos Kēork V daringly resisted the anti-religious propaganda of the Communists and condemned their tactics of persecution and injustice. In later years, an old and enfeebled man, he subjected himself to self-imprisonment at his residence. Since the Soviet occupation of Armenia in 1920 he had repeatedly referred to himself as "vshdali" ("despaired") in open defiance of the Communist masters of Armenia for their hostility toward the Church. His attitude was less than acceptable to the Communists. However, they spared his life because of the devotion and respect he commanded from the Armenians of the diaspora.

Soviet policies toward Ēchmiadzin also had their impact upon the Armenian Church in America and elsewhere, which led to bitter controversy between political groups and in the

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[1] Editorial, "Pnagan Mahov" ("By Way of Natural Death"), Hairenik, July 30, 1927.

Armenian press. Soviet authorities were not pleased with high-ranking Armenian clergymen who directly or indirectly disagreed with their ideology. They especially criticized Bishop Krikoris Balak'ian of Paris, France, Archbishop Nersēs Melik'-T'ankian of Azrbaijan,Persia, and Primate, Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian of Boston, Massachusetts.

Much displeasure was expressed by one Soviet Armenian government official, A. Erzngian, who alleged that Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian had turned the Church into an arena for political struggles where May 28th observances were not only held, but were presided over by the Archbishop himself. He concluded that such activities as those of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian made Ēchmiadzin a target for anti-religious propaganda, bearing out the saying that "hostility breeds hostility."[1]

Armenag Nazar, the editor of the Baikar in 1925, was highly critical of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian's partiality in allowing the May 28th observances and considered this an open manifestation against the government of Armenia.[2]

As the Tashnag Party intensified its opposition to Soviet Armenia and consequently alienated itself from

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[1] "Khorhrtayin Garhavarout'iwně Ew Ēchmiadzině" ("The Soviet Government and Ēchmiadzin"), Baikar, December 28, 1925.

[2] Armenag Nazar, "Our Gert'a Hay Egeghets'in" ("Where is the Armenian Church Heading"), Baikar, June 10, 1925.

Ēchmiadzin, its opponents became highly critical of Tashnag policy. The Tashnags labeled their antagonists as Communist sympathizers who allegedly championed the Soviet regime.[1] Rivalry between Tashnag and non-Tashnag elements posed a threat to the religious role of the Church in America and elsewhere. To rationalize Tashnag intervention in Church affairs, a Tashnag American-Armenian historian, Sarkis Atamian, offers the following justification:

> The aim of the Dashnaktzoutyoun in America as well as in other Armenian communities abroad, was, and still is, the freeing of the Armenian Church from the influence of the Soviet government.[2]

Paradoxically, the Tashnag leaders who championed the cause of the Armenian Church against atheistic Communism were themselves Marxists. The party's foremost ideologue, a Marxist himself, Mik'aēl Varantian, wrote that "religion is a frightful disaster, an epidemic of universal proportions."[3]

Fanatic Tashnag opposition to the Soviet regime divested the party of an objective view of the full radius of relationship of the diaspora to Ēchmiadzin, and of a more comprehensive understanding of the patriotic sentiments of non-Tashnag elements. On the other hand, the Rhamgavar Party failed to draw a clear distinction between pro-fatherland and pro-Soviet sentiments. In their suspicion of the fundamental anti-religious ideology of the Tashnag Party, the Rhamgavars interpreted the Tashnag anti-Soviet policy as anti-Ēchmiadzin. It is against the background of these essential differences that the Armenian Church in America was to be convulsed by polemics.

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[1] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 358.

[2] Ibid., p. 360.

[3] Bedros Norhad, The Armenian Church and Its Defenders (New York: The Gotchnag Press, 1958), p. 3.

C. Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian: Interim Locum-Tenens: (July 20, 1920-March 7, 1921)

The ecclesiastical controversy which had crippled the Diocese since 1917 and had led to two rival administrations, in Worcester and Providence, was reconciled at the Diocesan Convention of July 20, 1920, in Worcester. The convention was presided over by the Plenipotentiary to the Catholicos, Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian.[1] Archbishop Mouradpēgian was successful in persuading the parties involved to the idea of administrative unity under one Diocese. The Convention elected Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, the Chancellor of Ēchmiadzin, as the new Primate. The delegates also elected a new Central Executive Committee to administer Diocesan affairs temporarily until the next Diocesan Convention. Pending the arrival of the new Primate to the United States on March 7, 1921, Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian assumed office as Locum-Tenens.[2]

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[1] Mouradpēgian departed from the United States for Ēchmiadzin on August 10, 1920.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, Worcester, Mass., August 21, 1921, p. 10.

The Locum-Tenens and the Central Executive Committee were confronted by two major problems. First, they were determined to heal the wounds of dissension and normalize the relationship of parishes with the Diocese. Secondly, they hoped to alleviate the financial difficulties of the Diocese. As a beginning, the Central Executive Committee issued an official communication to the Faithful proclaiming the end of the schism and urging them to establish harmonious relations with the Diocese. By way of parish visitations, pastoral letters and personal contacts, the Locum-Tenens succeeded in improving the relationship of the communities with the Diocesan authority. Those clergymen who did not have their own parishes were given pastoral assignments.[1] The Locum-Tenens and Central Executive Committee were not as successful in overcoming the financial difficulties.

In his eight months in office as Locum-Tenens, Bishop Giwlēsērian strove to execute his duties despite political rivalries and personal conflicts which, although subdued, were still present. Unfortunately, this period of relative peace and goodwill was not of long duration.

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[1] On October 28, 1920, an Armenian Roman Catholic priest, Hagop Vartanian, was admitted into the ranks of the Armenian Church. He was assigned as pastor to St. Vartanants' Church in Lowell, Mass. Four years later, on January 8, 1924, the Religious Council of the Diocese sanctioned his defrocking. "Amerigahay Geank"("American-Armenian Life"), Baikar, January 19, 1924.

D. The New Primate: Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian (1921-1928)

Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian was born on April 21, 1867, in Norshēn, a village in the province of Arts'akh in northern Armenia. His baptismal name was Dikran. He was educated in the village school and later attended the Kēorkian Seminary in Ēchmiadzin, where he was ordained a monk in 1894. He served on the staff of the Seminary for a short interim and then attended Petrograd University in Russia, where he specialized in history and philology. In 1917, he was elevated to the episcopacy by Catholicos Kēork V and subsequently served as Chancellor of the Holy See. Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian is considered to be one of the last great intellectuals of his era to have graduated from the Seminary of Ēchmiadzin.

His background included wide involvement in church and national affairs in the homeland, and extensive administrative experience in schools and Dioceses in Armenia. Prior to his election as Primate, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian had served as the Chancellor of Ēchmiadzin. Fluent in Armenian, Russian, French, German, and, later, in English, the Archbishop had written numerous books and articles in Armenian periodicals, especially in Ararat, official publication of Ēchmiadzin. Among his published works, Frig Tiwan ("The Archives of Frig") is regarded as one of the foremost philological treatises on

Armenian literature in the Middle Ages.[1]

Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian arrived in New York from Ēchmiadzin on March 7, 1921. He was welcomed by Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian and representatives of the Armenian churches and community. His clerical garb, and refined manners, combined with his scholarly background and speech, favorably impressed those who had gathered to greet him in New York. He was escorted to St. Illuminator Armenian Church on 27th Street, where he performed the Hrashap'arh Service ("Processional Hymn").[2]

The election of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian and the era of his primacy were important for several reasons. He came from the Land of Ararat and was an eyewitness to the tragic events of the early twenties in Turkey. For the first time, the incumbent of the American Diocese was an Eastern Armenian who held the advantage of direct access to the Catholicos at Ēchmiadzin when he wished to discuss the true aspirations of the Armenians in America.[1] In America, as elsewhere, Armenians were preoccupied with the unpalatable state of Armenia. It was expected that the new Primate would be actively involved in Armenian national affairs.

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[1] Frig (1234?-1315?) was an Armenian poet of the Middle Ages who lived in Western Armenia. His poetry reflects strong patriotic sentiments, social concern, and forceful protest against the injustices of feudalism. Frig Tiwan was awarded by the Russian Academy of Sciences of Petrograd. Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, Frig Tiwan (New York: Armenian General Benevolent Union, 1952).

[2] According to the tradition of the Armenian Church, this service signifies a clergyman's plea for Divine blessing on the mission he is about to undertake as he enters a new city or country.

One such task confronting the Primate was the readmittance of the Diocese into the Armenian National Union from which it had withdrawn in the previous year under pressure from the Tashnag Party and upon the insistence of the Plenipotentiary, Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian.[2] Another issue was the general mood of reformation which pervaded the Armenian Church throughout the world and called for changes in every phase of church life and order. The Diocese in America was gripped by this tide of reformation which proved to be rewarding for both the Church and her faithful. The changes were concerned with the modification of sacramental canons, the establishment of Sunday Schools, adoption of the Gregorian Calendar, and the formation of church organizations. In principle, it was encouraging to see the Church responding to the needs and demands of the times, even though superficially.

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[1] Although the Primate's Eastern-Armenian background was advantageous for Ēchmiadzin, it proved not so favorable for the Primate himself because the Armenian community in America consisted largely of immigrants from Turkey. Their national mentality and aspirations were not always in accord with those of their brethren from Armenia proper.

[2] The Armenian National Union was formed on April 2, 1917, in America as a response to the Armenian cause. It continued its activities until March 31, 1923, when it was dissolved in view of new political developments which the Union found difficult to cope with. "Azkayin Miout'iwn"" ("National Unity") Baikar, April 16, 1923; Adenakrout'iwn, Worcester, Mass., August 21, 1921, pp. 27-28.

Politically, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian was regarded by his supporters and critics as a Tashnag partisan Primate. A prominent Tashnag leader and the late editor-in-chief of the Hairenik Press, Reuben Darbinian, writing about the crisis of the Armenian Church provides the following testimony:

> There was a time when Archbishop Tirayr Hovhannēsian, a known sympathizer of the Dashnaks (Tashnag) was Prelate of the Armenian Church, when his secretary was a prominent member of the Federation (Tashnag Party) and when the delegates in overwhelming majority were Dashnak sympathizers the Federation could easily have seized the Church.[1]

By many he was considered overly authoritarian and traditional, incompatible with the liberal atmosphere of America.

Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, a distinguished scholar and author, was a forceful churchman regarded by his critics as an "unholy terror." His extreme traditional views lost him the primacy in 1928. As a result of his extreme traditionalism in the performance of rituals and ceremonies and his dogmatism in the face of controversy, wide charges were brought against him as an arch-conservative. By nature he was uncompromising, domineering, and impatient with human ignorance and mediocrity. His manner of speech and demeanor displayed an air of sophistication. Various anecdotes about the Archbishop portray him as a stubborn man with little kindness, who mellowed in his later years, especially after his resignation in 1928.

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[1] Reuben Darbinian, "The Armenian Church Break" in Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church (Boston: Hairenik Press, 1958), p. 5.

Zarouhi Kalēmk'earian, a writer from New York, nostalgically depicts Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian's afternoon visits to Fort Tryon Park in New York:

> A book under his arm--a paper parcel in his hand with bread crumbs--these were for the birds, the pigeons, who knew him and noticing him from afar, would hop toward him, following him to his familiar bench where they would make merry.

It is also told that as the Archbishop lay in the hospital in his last days; his close friends and neighbors, the Simonians, whose hospitality he had often enjoyed, paid him a visit. Turning to them with weary and sorrowful eyes, he uttered, "My birds... they will be hungry..."[1]

E. First Efforts Toward Reorganization of the Diocese

On March 10, 1921, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian arrived at Diocesan Headquarters in Worcester, Massachusetts. As Primate of the American Diocese, he was anxious from the start to be involved with more than just routine affairs.

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[1] Zarouhi Kalēmk'earian, "Medz Ew Anungjeli Martě" ("The Great and Invulnerable Man"), Hayastanyiatz Yegeghetzy, XVIII (May, 1956), 151.

One of his first official duties entailed presiding at the consecration services of St. Illuminator Church in New York on April 17, 1921.[1] The Primate performed the Divine Liturgy and the sermon was delivered by Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian. At his solemn service, the new Primate was introduced to the people by the reading of the Pontifical encyclical by Father Hovhan Garabedian.[2] The encyclical confirmed the credentials of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian as the new Primate of the American Diocese.[3]

Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian's message to the congregation was forceful and indicated the policies he intended to pursue as Primate. The main thrust of his address stressed the task which lay ahead--one of complete renewal of the spiritual life. He urged the Diocese and churches to render themselves attractive to the faithful and engage national and ecclesiastical matters with authority and effectiveness. The Primate observed that the spirit of discipline in the Diocese had been ignored, if not extinguished, by many. He asked that everyone show respect for discipline for the ultimate welfare of the spiritual life of the communicants. He also stressed that young and old alike must share responsibility in the great work of the spiritual and administrative recovery of the Diocese.

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[1] The members of the Church Trustees of this church have been strongly Tashnag-oriented. After the split of the Diocese in 1933, the Church became a Tashnag stronghold.

[2] In the following year, in a letter dated March 1, 1922, the Primate informed him of his decision to relieve him from priestly duties. "Hovhan Dzayrakoyn Vartabed Garabedian" ("Father Hovhan Garabedian"), Azk-Bahag, March 8, 1922.

[3] "Hay Kaght'aganout'iwnĕ" ("The Armenian Colony"), The Gotchnag, April 30, 1921, p. 613.

The Primate continued emphasizing two priorities of the Diocese: the renewal and expansion of parish churches, and the establishment of Armenian language schools. These would constitute the foundation of the Armenian community in America. However, he noted, these objectives could only be achieved through a spirit of sacrifice and determination. In conclusion, the Primate clarified the mission of the Armenian Church for the people and exhorted his flock to be keenly respective toward their Church, which had been, and still remained, the moral and spiritual mainstay of the Armenian people.[1]

One week later, on April 25, a private meeting was held in New York at which the Primate presided. This gathering was attended by twenty-four well-to-do Armenian community leaders who unanimously resolved to form the "Committee for the Guardianship of the Diocese."[2] Its purpose was to raise $10,000 to $12,000 for the Diocese, but the Committee's efforts were fruitless due to inadequate planning.[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, Worcester, Mass., August 1, 1921, pp. 14-15.

[3] Ibid.

In May, 1921, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, accompanied by Vahan Kardashian, a graduate of Yale University and an attorney, and General Sebouh of the Armenian Army of the Independent Republic, called upon President Warren G. Harding at the White House.[1] Their audience with the President focused upon the Armenian Question and the role the United States might play in its solution. This meeting was also attended by prominent statesmen and civic leaders such as Charles Evans Hughes, the Secretary of State; James W. Gerard, a New York attorney; Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts; and James L. Barton of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. All these men were considered to be strong Armenophiles in the United States. They endorsed freedom for the Armenians and the redemption of their lands lost to the Turks. They supported and helped to organize lobbying groups such as the Armenia-America Society and the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia.[2] Unfortunately, no further information is available concerning this meeting with President Harding, but later events indicate that no commitment was obtained from the President.

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[1] The reference to this visit in Hairenik is very brief. From the point of view of American-Armenian relationships, the political developments in the early twenties may prove advantageous for the understanding of the atmosphere of the Armenian community in America. "Haygagan Geank'" ("Armenian Life"), Hairenik, May 25, 1921.

[2] Grabill, Protestant Diplomacy, pp. 110-111.

As a background, it should be noted that the Armenia-America Society and the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia were strongly convinced that the Harding administration would usher in more favorable conditions for the Armenians. The Armenia-America Society, with Barton as its unofficial head, subscribed to the concept of a United States government financed Armenian national home, i.e., an autonomous Armenia in Cilicia, Turkey.[1] Secretary Hughes rejected this idea. On the other hand, Gerard and his supporters, along with the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia, opposed the contentions of the Armenia-America Society. Instead, they strongly requested of Hughes de jure recognition for the Soviet Armenian Republic and the territories specified for Armenia in the Treaty of Sevres signed on August 10, 1920.[2]

Subsequently, Hughes and Lodge remained noncommittal to the plan for an Armenian National Home. The American public lost interest in a confrontation with Turkey on behalf of the Armenians. The Armenians were left completely alone.

The Primate now turned his attention to the reorganization of the Diocese. The Central Executive Committee designated August 21, 1921, as the date for the forthcoming Diocesan Convention to be held at the Holy Saviour Church in

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[1] Ibid., p. 257.

[2] Ibid.

Worcester, Mass. The Diocese urged the parishes to send delegates.[1] According to the accounts of one reporter, there was a distinct change in the atmosphere of the Convention over that of past years, He ascribed the change to the aura of the new Primate.[2]

The delegates dealt with several important issues, among them the budget of the Diocese, the revision of the Church Constitution, reconciliation with the National Armenian Union, the transferral of the Diocese from Worcester to Boston, and the training of clergy.[3] Among these issues, much discussion centered upon the question of reconciliation. The majority of the delegates favored the rejoining of the Diocese into the National Armenian Union from which she had withdrawn at the last Diocesan Convention of July 20, 1920. The Central Executive Committee was authorized by the convention to take the necessary steps for this purpose.

A second major issue concerned the transferral of the seat of the Diocese. By majority vote it was decided to transfer the Diocese from Worcester to Boston. There were two major reasons for this action: (1) more Armenians were concentrated in Boston, and (2) the Armenian Press and the Central Committees of various Armenian political, cultural, and charitable organizations were located in Boston.

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[1] Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn" ("Official Notice"), The Gotchnag, July 23, 1921, p. 990.

[2] Menawor (pseud.), "Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghove" ("The Diocesan Convention of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, September 3, 1921, p. 1079.

[3] Ibid., p. 1080-1081; Adenakrout'iwn, Worcester, Mass., August 21, 1921, p. 21.

Another area of concern was the state of the Diocesan treasury, which had reached its lowest ebb. The budget for the fiscal year 1921 was set for $15,000, of which $5,000 would be used to defray Diocesan debts.

The Primate's address to the delegates reflected upon certain issues which were also on the agenda. These included a census of Armenians in America, the Armenian Schools, the Sunday Schools, reconciliation with the National Armenian Union, reorganization of the Diocese, financial aid to Ēchmiadzin, and the training of clergy. It appeared that the distrust which had prevailed at previous conventions had been dispelled, and the delegates responded favorably to the Primate's plea to focus their energies upon a united effort rather than dwell upon past separatist tendencies. The Primate solemnly pledged to do all within his power to regenerate and reorganize the Diocese, elevating it from its present destitute condition to a more respectable state. Having spent the past several months trying to revive and inspire a stagnant Diocese, the Archbishop was now optimistic at winning the support and cooperation of the delegates at the convention.

This climate of goodwill did not prevail for long. The Primate became embroiled in administrative problems. Although he was determined to cling to the authority of his high office for their solution, these issues eventually determined the fate of his primacy.

F. Concerns of a Troubled Church

Socio-political developments in the early twenties kept the Armenian communities in America inflamed by passionate patriotism, and this affected both community affairs and the future of the Church. The majority of Armenian immigrants felt the growing need for spiritual guidance once they accepted the United States as their permanent home. Reforms in the Diocese were imperative if the second generation was to become more receptive to the Church. By the time the new generation reached their late teens, many of them manifested ambivalence toward the church of their immigrant parents. The Armenian Church was expected to modify her antiquated customs and improve the caliber of her priesthood.

Armenag Nazar, the editor of Azk-Bahag, later called the Baikar, wrote controversial editorials dealing with the issue of renewal in the Church. Clergymen often became targets for his criticism, regardless of their rank, personality, or capabilities. However, Nazar did offer constructive suggestions, an example of which is the following:

> Today we are living in the twentieth century and a man of the twentieth century cannot feel, think, and lead a spiritual life as did men of seven hundred and eight hundred years ago. Those institutions which do not progress with the times, cannot survive.[1]

In another article concerning reformation, he noted the shortcomings of poorly trained clergymen in the following words:

> Regardless of what kind of spirit and reformation may be initiated in the Armenian Church, they are destined to be ineffective. They may even become detrimental as long as there cannot be found receptive individuals who can comprehend and apply them in depth. That is, unless, a priesthood, worthy of its calling, is prepared which truly displays spiritual life, education, and industry.[2]

Still another major concern for the Church was the loose relationship of parish churches with Diocesan authorities. The administration of a growing network of parish churches subjected to Diocesan supervision was too complex to be comprehended by a community of immigrants preoccupied with the prospect of returning to their homeland. However, to meet the increasing administrative and organizational needs of the Diocese by which to provide better services for the parishes, the Diocese moved from Worcester to Boston in 1923, the latter a more metropolitan area with a denser Armenian population.

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[1] Armenag Nazar, "Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy Paregarkout'iwně" ("The Renewal of the Armenian Church"), Azk-Bahag, March 4, 1922.

[2] Armenag Nazar was strongly opposed to the system of celibacy in the Armenian Church. He often advocated its immediate termination. Ibid., March 18, 1922.

1. Steps Toward Renewal

In the twenties, a series of articles appeared in Armenian newspapers both here and abroad, urging the expediency of reformation in the Armenian Church. The four Hierarchical Sees of the Church strongly advocated this move, but political, social, and economic reasons made it difficult for them to effect the work of reformation. However, certain positive steps were taken by Ēchmiadzin which encouraged the Diocese in America to initiate its program of renewal.[1]

On October 8, 1920, Bishop Giwlēsērian transmitted a report to Catholicos Kēork in Ēchmiadzin concerning the renewal of the Armenian Church in America.[2] In a reply, dated September 1, 1921, the Pontiff instructed Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian to communicate with Bishop Giwlēsērian concerning the report which contained vital insights for the spiritual and administrative improvement of the Church. The Primate was instructed to meet with lay and clerical personnel in order to study the document in detail. Their deliberations and findings were to be subject to Pontifical scrutiny before implementation.[3] There is no information available that

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[1] "Hayrabedgan Gontag" ("Pontifical Encyclical") issued by Catholicos Kēork V on November 11, 1922, The Gotchnag, July 28, 1923, pp. 946-947.

[2] Papkēn Giwlēsērian, Paregarkout'iwn Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy ("The Renewal of the Armenian Church"), (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicate of Cilicia Press, 1940), p. 4.

[3] Ibid., p. 5.

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indicates such a meeting took place.[1]

In his report about the betterment of the Armenian Church in America, Bishop Giwlēsērian observed that, from her inception, no serious efforts had been expended to set guidelines and priorities for church management. According to Bishop Giwlēsērian, the Diocese was but a nominal organization, lacking the central authority, sufficient funds, and proper personnel with which to carry out its mission effectively. Furthermore, the establishment of parish churches was often irregular and spasmodic. The religious life of the communities was many times hampered by tension and discord, often generated by partisan feuding.

More often than not, the average clergy was pious and dedicated, but his role as spiritual advisor was of questionable quality. He was from the same social stratum as his immigrant parishioners, and his education was limited. In response to these concerns it was hoped that the forthcoming Diocesan Convention would address itself to these pressing issues.

On October 7-8, 1923, a Clergy Conference in Worcester preceded the Diocesan Convention. The agenda of this gathering was overburdened with sixteen issues of major concern to the Church. Resolutions were passed concerning the modification of the sacramental canon, the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, the use of the organ during church services, the establishment of Sunday Schools, the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar, the preparation of priests, rapproachment with the Protestant Episcopal Church, the formation of church organizations, and the formation of a separate Diocese in California.[1] The Diocesan Convention adopted the resolutions of the Clergy Conference.

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[1] A. Nazar, a close associate of Bishop Giwlēsērian, observes that initially Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian designated three persons from Boston to study the Bishop's report. Nothing further was heard of the matter and the issue lay dormant. Armenag Nazar, "Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy Paregarkout'iwně" ("Reformation of the Armenian Church"), Azk-Bahag, March 4, 1922.

In principle, many a church-concerned communicant was encouraged at the sight of the Church responding to the needs and demands of the times, at least superficially. But more sophisticated persons found it difficult to share the optimism of their compatriots. Rather, they doubted that the religious and lay leaders of the Church were prepared to implement such demanding programs.

Armenag Nazar once again skeptically voiced his concern and doubt over the state of the Church and the measures to be taken by the Diocesan Convention:

> It is a fact that the Armenian Church in America is not in a prosperous and enviable state. The clergy blame the people for being alienated from the church and for remaining indifferent to her needs. The people in their turn are critical of the priesthood who has forsaken them and thinks of nothing else but

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[1] "Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově" ("The Diocesan Convention of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, October 20, 1923, pp. 1332-1333.

> the administration of the sacraments. Of course there are truths and exaggerations in both testimonies. According to my beliefs, to end these complaints and disenchantment, two points warrant attention: (1) the training of a qualified priesthood. Not only is there a lack of clergymen in America, but among them, the qualified are rare. (2) The administration of the church should be decentralized. Just as it is impractical to petition the Mother See for administrative matters other than of a doctrinal and basic nature, and await instructions, so it is inconceivable, for example, to supervise the activities of the California churches from Boston or Worcester. Each Diocesan Convention wastes hours in revising the Constitution, but all the labor remains futile because without Pontifical confirmation they cannot be implemented. Thus the issue before us is inconceivable in our time and surroundings. With a sagacious decentralization of the Armenian churches in America, the churches may flourish and become revitalized.[1]

2. The Transferral of the Diocesan Center from Worcester to Boston (1923)

During the Diocesan Convention of July 10, 1920, in Worcester, a committee was established to study the possibilities of the removal of the Diocese from Worcester to another site with a relatively large Armenian population. The committee reported its findings to the Diocesan Convention of August 21, 1921, in Worcester. On the basis of Article 10 of the Constitution, the committee argued that the Diocese must remain in Worcester.[2] The majority of the delegates contested the argument of the Committee, pointing out that the provisions of the said Article in no way prevented such a move. The Article in discussion read as follows:

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[1] Editorial, "Amerigayi Hay Egeghets'woy Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovĕ" ("The Diocesan Convention of the Armenian Church of America"), Azk-Bahag, November 29, 1922.

[2] Adnekarout'iwn, Worcester, Mass., August 21, 1921, p. 21.

> The Diocesan Center of the Primate of the Armenians in America will be located temporarily in the city of Worcester of the state of Massachusetts, which is not only a center densely populated with Armenians, but also has its own national church and Diocesan House.[1]

The discussion then centered upon the choice of a location for the headquarters of the Diocese. New York and Boston were suggested as possible sites. By a majority vote it was decided to remove Diocesan headquarters from Worcester to Boston, but the transferral was not completed until early 1923.[2] The Holy Trinity Church of Boston, consecrated in 1923, was used as Diocesan headquarters for the next four years. In the summer of 1927 the Diocese was removed to New York where it has remained to this day.

The period of the twenties presented a tragic chapter in the history of the Church and homeland of the Armenians. The happenings in the Old World in turn reacted upon the churches in the New. The hierarchs at Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin who assigned priests and confirmed Primates for the United States, often gave proof of their inability to understand the problems of the immigrants, thus compounding the difficulties of the local parishes.

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[1] Sahmanatrout'iwn, 1903; p. 9.

[2] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, p. 85.

Armenag Nazar provides the following observation:

> It is wrong to assume that there are numerous difficulties obstructing the reformation of the Armenian Church in America, that it is impossible to undertake any steps without the consent of Holy Ēchmiadzin or the National Ecclesiastical Assembly. A somewhat open-minded outlook in keeping with the times and circumstances, rationality, and comprehension of the liberal spirit of the Armenian Church, will be sufficient to prevent the Armenian Church from appealing for every issue to Ēchmiadzin and from expecting decisions and solutions from the Catholicos of All Armenians. This is neither against the better interests or the discipline of the Church and, indeed, is in accord with the wishes of the Catholicos of All Armenians.[1]

By late 1923, traditional-liberal controversy between the Primate and his opponents was beginning to take its toll in the American Diocese. The Primate who had been once highly respected was increasingly finding himself involved in bitter conflict from which he could not extricate himself. For this tragedy both the Primate and his adversaries were to blame.

G. The Deepening Rift

While the Diocese was expanding between 1924 and 1926 by the acquisitions of churches, the Primate's relationship with the Diocesan leadership posed special difficulties. One major problem concerned the use of the *altar stone* in churches which were not yet consecrated or in non-Armenian churches during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.[1] The Primate vehemently opposed such use of the altar stone, arguing that it was against the tradition of the Church. His opponents disagreed with his thinking and were determined to fight to the end, knowing full well that the outcome of the controversy would prove to be fateful to the primacy of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian.

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[1] Editorial, "Hay Egeghets'in Ew Hay Tbrots'ě" ("The Armenian Church and the Armenian School"), *Baikar*, October 25, 1923.

1. Controversy over the Altar Stone

Opposition to the Primate had been brewing for some time. The controversy over the use of the altar stone brought it to the fore and in time it grew to affect the entire Diocese. Two California Churches, the Holy Cross in Los Angeles, founded in 1923, and St. Sahag and Mesrob in Reedley, founded in 1924, were being used by the parishoners without being consecrated by a bishop. The Primate urged the Board of Trustees of these churches to refrain from use of these edifices until they were dedicated and consecrated according to the tradition of the Armenian Church. He further suggested that they discontinue the use of the portable altar stone as a substitute for the consecration.

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[1] According to Armenian Church tradition, a small stone called an altar stone, is blessed and placed in the center of the altar of the Church where Divine Liturgy is being celebrated. This stone signifies the sacredness of the altar. In the event that Divine Liturgy is celebrated in a non-Armenian Church or non-consecrated church, it is customary to place this stone on the altar.

The officials of these two churches replied that, due to financial difficulties, they would be unable to meet the expenses involved in a visit of the Primate. This reasoning was not acceptable to the Primate, who insisted that the solemnity of his office, as guardian of ecclesiastical laws, compelled him to preserve and properly execute the traditional rituals of the Church. He could not allow Divine Liturgy to be celebrated in an unconsecrated Church.[1]

On May 25, 1924, the Parish Assembly of the Holy Cross Church in Los Angeles convened to consider this matter. The Assembly expressed its dismay at the uncompromising attitude of the Primate and disregarded the Primate's order to set a definite date for the consecration of their church.[2] The Membership Meeting informed the Primate that, due to the growing tension in the Los Angeles and Reedley Armenian communities, his visit would hardly be desirable at this time. The Central Executive of the Diocese attempted to clarify the position of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian by stating that his decision forbade only the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and not the performance of other religious services and ceremonies.[1] This controversy prompted a heated discussion among the churches, the Diocesan Convention, and the Armenian press. The general consensus was that the use of the portable altar stone had been in practice since time immemorial in Armenia and elsewhere in the diaspora.[2] In this country Armenians did not have their own church in many communities. Thus, when churches or halls were rented, arrangements had to be made to prepare suitable altar facilities with altar stones upon which to perform the Divine Liturgy. Previous Primates had allowed this customary practice.[3]

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[1] Editorial, "K'mahaj Garkatrout'iwn Mĕ" ("A Capricious Arrangement"), Baikar, May 24, 1924.

[2] "Los Anjelēsi Khntir" ("The Problem of Los Angeles"), Baikar, June 4, 1924.

On September 7, 1925, the Diocesan Convention which met at Boston took this matter into consideration during its third session. By majority vote, it was decided to continue the use of the portable altar stones and to petition the Catholicos in Ēchmiadzin in favor of this resolution.[4] Echmiadzin replied to the Diocesan request on October 25,

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[1] Maghak' Bērbērian, "Namag Khmpakrout'ean" ("Letter to the Editor"), *Baikar*, June 19, 1924.

[2] Akoulets'i, "Kalifornioy Egeghets'inerou Khntirě" ("The Crisis of the Churches of California"), *Baikar*, June 23, 1924.

[3] Editorial, "Bashdōnagani Mě Arht'iw" ("Upon the Occasion of an Official Decree"), *Baikar*, June 19, 1924.

[4] *Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Adenakrout'iwnner*, Boston, Mass., September 6-7, 1925, pp. 16-17.

1925, stating that the Catholicos preferred to postpone his decision upon that matter until the deliberations of a future National Ecclesiastical Assembly.[1]

The crisis of the altar stone would persist in the ensuing years, interwoven with other issues, which not only posed difficulties for the Diocese, but had serious consequences for the Primate.

2. The Drafting of a New Diocesan Constitution

A perennial issue on the agenda of nearly every Diocesan Convention since the establishment of the Armenian Church in America has been either the drafting of a Constitution, or the designation of a special committee to labor with amendments or revision. This issue has outweighed all other items in terms of time consumed. Stormy sessions have been devoted to scrutiny of the articles and their referral to a special committee which, in its turn, would carry such articles over to the next Diocesan Convention. To further complicate matters, the preliminary draft of the Constitution, as is customary in the Armenian Church, was always sent to Ēchmiadzin for confirmation. It may take months or even years before any communication is received. In the event of a reply, more often than not it may call for further revision and still another confirmation by Ēchmiadzin.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Zegoyts' Kerakoyn Hokewor Khorhrti Sourp Ēchmiadzni" ("Official Report of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Holy Ēchmiadzin"), The Gotchnag, July 7, 1926, p. 1048.

Like his predecessors, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, upon assuming office as Primate, became conscious of the need for drafting a new constitution for the Diocese. Armenag Nazar, a staunch opponent of the Primate, did not hesitate to be one of the first critics of the proposed constitution.

> Since the first day of assuming office, the Primate has undertaken a problem, and, without consulting previous studies, has undertaken the drafting of a constitution according to his own mentality and convictions. The work is being shuttled from one meeting to the next. If it ever bears results, it will again be sent to Ēchmiadzin and will remain there until a new Primate and new conventions, again will begin to revise the constitution.

A preliminary constitution prepared by the Primate was presented to the Diocesan Convention which met on September 6-7, 1925, at Boston.[1]

Because of the lack of time, it was decided that a seven member committee headed by the Primate should study the document in depth and seek suggestions and opinions on its usefulness from various parish officials. This committee would then submit its findings, first to the Central Executive Committee not later than January 1, 1926, then to the next Diocesan Convention for consideration. The delegates discussed several fundamental principles relating to the constitution:

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, September 6-7, 1925, Boston, Mass., p. 10.

(1) Not all authority should be concentrated in the hands of the Primate.

(2) The Constitution must be abbreviated and made compact.

(3) The Constitution should provide for moderate and lawful decentralization.

(4) The Diocesan Convention must become a permanent administrative organ.

(5) The Diocesan Convention should be the supreme legislative body.

It was agreed that during the next Diocesan Convention major sessions would be designated for the study of the revision of the new Constitution.[1]

Various writers have referred to this Constitution. However, their comments reflect more of a negative attitude rather than a positive one. A. Nazar in an editorial in the Baikar on September 3, 1925 made the following observations:

> A new Constitution which has all the shortcomings, if not more, of the present one now in use, and has no additional merit. We accidentally saw a copy of that constitution which consisted of some 269 lengthy and complicated articles and is a complete hodgepodge from which even the author himself cannot find his way out gracefully. In that constitution are contained extraneous, meaningless and even ridiculous articles which do not even comply with local laws and customs. They are unnatural to the present day mentality and can never be applied. Even more than all this is the spirit of this document which intends to rob the people of all their

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

> rights and to centralize all authority in the hands of the Primate. Even the Diocesan Convention is in a position inferior to that of the Primate. We cannot understand how such a medieval and antiquated Book of Law can be confirmed by the Diocesan Convention nor how it can be put to use in the twentieth century, especially in America.[1]

A similar criticism was provided by an editorial in The Gotchnag, the official organ of the Armenian Protestant community.

> This constitution is an anachronism. That is, it is incompatible with the progressive ideas of our times. In this constitution everything is centralized upon the Primate. Without his consent, there can be no meetings, no decisions, and no action. That spirit may have been transferred to Echmiadzin from the Orthodox hierarchy of Tsarist Russia. It cannot be reconciled with the democratic way of the Armenian Church nor with the free atmosphere of America.[2]

The editorial commented that a mere reading of the Constitution to the delegates would entail no difficulties. But, if the new Constitution were to be examined in detail, then the Convention would more than likely become the scene for stormy argument.

Thus, it became apparent that these criticisms were creating trouble for the Primate. Disenchantment, alienation, and opposition were increasing on all sides, giving rise to condemnation of the Primate's policies, which his critics considered to be detrimental to the welfare of the Church.

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[1] Editorial, "Hay Egeghets'woy Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovĕ" ("The Diocesan Convention of the Armenian Church"), Baikar, September 3, 1925.

[2] "Amerigahay Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovĕ" ("The Diocesan Convention of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, August 29, 1925, p. 1089.

In the following year, on June 20, 1926, the Diocesan Convention, which met at the Holy Trinity Church in Boston, devoted much of its time to examining the new Constitution.[1] The delegates were given the opportunity to get acquainted with fifty-one of the hundred articles of the new Constitution and subsequently sanctioned them. The Diocesan Convention which met from May 15-16, 1927, in Boston, examined and revised Articles 51 to 75 of the new Constitution. The Convention authorized the Central Executive Committee to proceed with the revision of the remaining twenty-five articles of the Constitution and then to forward it to the Catholicos at Ēchmiadzin for ratification.[2] One year later, on June 5, 1928, the new Constitution was sent to Ēchmiadzin. In its initial version the new Constitution was not acceptable to the opponents of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, but in its revised form it took from the Primate much of his authority, to the satisfaction of his adversaries.

In the following months to follow the new Constitution became a thorny problem, not only between the Primate and the Central Executive Committee, but also between the Religious Council and the Committee. The entire Religious Council supported the Primate. The road to understanding proved to be rough, for neither side was ready for concession or peace.

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[1] *Adenakrout'iwn,* Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp.15-16.

[2] *Ibid*.

The revised Constitution was confirmed by Ēchmiadzin on July 15, 1929, conditioned upon two essential principles included therein:

(1) The moderate and lawful decentralization of the Diocese.

(2) The supremacy of the Diocesan Council as the governing body in the American Diocese. A striking feature of this new Constitution was the greater emphasis placed upon the Central Executive Committee as the executive agency of the Diocesan Convention.[1]

By the time the Constitution was confirmed by the Catholicos on July 15, 1929, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian had stepped down from the Primacy of the American Diocese and had retired from an active ecclesiastical career.[2]

3. Description of the Revised Constitution

The new Constitution consisted of three chapters with thirty-three articles concerning the administration of the Diocese. The highlights of the three chapters in summary form appear below.[3]

I. General Rules (Articles 1-11)

The Armenian Churches established in America constitute a spiritual union and are an individual part of the Holy

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[1] Azkayin Sahmanatrout'iwn ("Constitution of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church of America"), 1934, p. 53.

[2] Ibid., p. 51

[3] Ibid., pp. 53-67.

Armenian Apostolic Church. The Diocese will function under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Spiritual Authority of the Catholicos of All Armenians in Ēchmiadzin.

In the event that the Diocese should cease to exist as an administrative body in the United States, all church deeds and properties will be transferred to the Catholicate of All Armenians in Ēchmiadzin.

II. Diocesan Convention (Articles 12-22)

The Diocesan Convention is the representative body of Armenians in America and is the highest authority of the Armenian Church in the United States. All ecclesiastical bodies of churches are subject to its authority. The Diocesan Convention is composed of elected lay delegates and of those clergy in charge of parishes. The Diocesan Convention is responsible to Supreme Spiritual Authorities in Ēchmiadzin.

Each parish shall be represented by one delegate for each 100 voting members. The Annual Diocesan Convention will be held on the first Sunday in September, the site of which will be determined each year by the Diocesan Convention. Extraordinary special meetings can be held in case of emergency situations upon the invitation of the Primate and Central Executive Committee.

The agenda of the Diocesan Convention shall be prepared by the Primate in conjunction with the Central Executive Committee. Within one week, the minutes and resolutions of the Convention shall be forwarded to the Catholicos for ratification. He is invested with the power of approval or rejection.

The Diocesan Convention has the authority to elect or retire the Primate of the Diocese, pending approval of the Catholicos of All Armenians.

III. The Primate of the Diocese(Articles 23-27) and The Central Executive Committee (Articles 28-33)

The Primate of the Diocese (Articles 23-27)

The Primate of the Diocese is the President of the Diocesan Convention and the Central Executive Committee.

The Primate is elected by the Diocesan Convention for a period of four years and is approved by the Catholicos of All Armenians.

When the Primacy becomes vacant, the Central Executive Committee shall appoint a Locum-Tenens who shall preside over the Central Executive Committee, conduct the affairs of the Primacy, and, in conjunction with the Central Executive Committee, prepare a list of three candidates for the office of Primate.

The duties of the Primate include parish visitations, consecration of churches, ordination of clergy, and supervision over the ceremonies, rites, and creed of the Armenian Church.

Central Executive Committee (Articles 28-33)

The Central Executive Committee is the ruling body of the Diocesan Convention and is elected by the Convention for four years.

The Central Executive Committee shall be composed of the Primate and nine members (four clergymen and five laymen).

The duties of the Central Executive Committee include supervision over all ecclesiastical institutions and officials of the Diocese, confirmation or revocation of decisions of the Membership Meeting, confirmation or dismissal of Church Trustees, appointment of a Locum-Tenens when necessary, and management of the financial affairs of the Diocese.

H. Division of the Jurisdiction of the Diocese in North America (1927)

The Diocese witnessed two significant changes in 1927. First, Diocesan headquarters were moved to New York City and, secondly, the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church was established in California under direct jurisdiction of Ēchmiadzin. Both actions were undertaken with the hope of providing greater administrative solidarity and a better administrative response to the spiritual needs of all the communicants of the Armenian communities. Also, underlying this decision were ecclesiastical politics involving personality conflicts, ambitions, partisan intrigue, provincialism, and honest differences over policy decisions.

1. Transfer of Eastern Diocesan Headquarters from Boston to New York (1927)

Even before the transferral of the Diocesan headquarters from Worcester to Boston in 1923, there had been a strong desire by the Armenians of New York to locate the Diocese there. For various sociological, political, and cultural reasons, Armenians in New York were convinced that their city was the ideal location.

The desire to move Diocesan headquarters to New York was of practical and vital importance because in New York City and its suburbs a large Armenian population resided. It was also observed that the Archbishop himself may have preferred to move to New York in order to keep aloof from the headquarters of both the political organizations and their press.

During the Diocesan Convention which met May 15-16, 1927, in Boston, the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese once again urged the immediate removal of Diocesan headquarters from Boston to New York.[1] After lengthy discussion, the majority of the delegates favored New York as the new site of

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[1] _Adenakrout'iwn_, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp. 14-51, 51.

Diocesan headquarters. Two months later, the Primate, with his secretary, moved into a two-room office on Fifth Avenue in New York.[1] On June 1, 1949, Diocesan headquarters were relocated in a building on 2nd Avenue. Today the Diocesan House with St. Vartan Cathedral stands on this site. The consecration of St. Vartan Cathedral presided over by Vazkēn I, Catholicos of All-Armenians, took place on April 28, 1969.

2. Creation of the Western Diocese in California (1927)

In the latter part of the ninetieth century, Armenian immigration to the New World had Worcester, Massachusetts, as its primary destination. The Armenian faith was introduced into the United States by these immigrants, first in the eastern states of this continent, and then into California by Armenians migrating westward as early as the 1880s.[2] Armenian immigrants flowed in the succeeding decades into Fresno, Fowler, and Los Angeles. They planted the first seeds of the Armenian Church in order to satisfy their own spiritual needs. The first church in California was built, and subsequently consecrated by the Primate, Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian, on October 14, 1900. What the city of Worcester in

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[1] These rooms were leased by the Diocese until 1947. For the next two years the Diocese used the facilities of a building owned by the Episcopalians on 20th Street, New York City.

[2] A good survey of early Armenian immigration is provided by Moushegh Seropian, "Kalifornioy Kaghout'ē" ("The Colony of California"), Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ē, 1912, pp. 56-75.

Massachusetts, had been for immigrating Armenians to the Eastern United States, Fresno, California, became for Armenians settling in that state. It was from this, base that Armenian immigration moved into other cities of California to make it their permanent home.

New churches included Saint Gregory in Fowler in 1910, St. Mary in Yettem in 1911, Holy Cross in Los Angeles in 1925, and St. Sahag and Mesrob Churches in Reedley in 1924; other communities were starting to organize themselves into parishes. Because of the distance which separated them from the Diocesan Center in New York and the steady growth of the Armenian community in California, the establishment of a Western Diocese in California became an important issue. Such a move had to be official, and special permission could only be granted by the Catholicos by means of a Pontifical encyclical. In 1916 the Diocesan Convention favorably received the request of the delegates from California and submitted the resolution to the Catholicos at Ēchmiadzin for disposition. On January 28, 1917, a Diocesan Convention was convened in the hall of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Fresno over which Father Vartan Kasbarian, the pastor of the church, presided. Eleven delegates, representing the parishes in California, participated in the meeting which dealt with the issue of establishing a Western Diocese of the Armenian Church whose jurisdiction would cover the Western States of

America. The results of the proceedings were reported to Ēchmiadzin as well as to the Diocese in Worcester.

Five months later, in a letter dated June 20, 1917, the Pontiff instructed the Diocese in Worcester to review this matter in a Diocesan Convention, from its moral, administrative, and economic perspectives, and to report to Ēchmiadzin the results of their deliberations. It was further suggested by the Pontiff that a special delegation from California attend the Diocesan Convention to provide the necessary explanations and clarifications of the matter.[1] Subsequently, during the Diocesan Convention of April 7 and 8, 1918, in Worcester, Vahan K'iwrk'jian, the special representative from Fresno, submitted the same report to the delegates as had been forwarded to the Catholicos by the Diocesan Convention of California.[2] K'iwrk'jian explained in detail the reasons and benefits of a positive decision. The primary argument for a separate diocese in California was presented as a matter of geographic expediency. In no way was this Diocese to be a counter-diocese to that of the Eastern part of the United States. Rather, it was to exist as a full canonical jurisdiction established for purposes of administrative facility.[1] A spirit of cooperation and mutual coexistence was to mark the relationship between the jurisdictions.

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[1] Artsanakrout'iwnk', Worcester, Mass., April 7-8, 1918, p. 100.

[2] Vahan K'iwrk'jian was an author, teacher, and community and church leader who became instrumental in 1909 in establishing the American branch of the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

The Diocesan Convention unanimously gave its consent to the request, conditioned upon the decision of the Pontiff. It was further agreed that the Californians would remain under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Diocese until Pontifical approval was received.

Once again, at the Diocesan Convention in Boston on September 6 and 7, 1925, the issue of the separate Diocese for California was discussed, and it was reiterated that no new information was available.[2] However, the prolonged uncertainty surrounding the issue came to its end when the delegates of the California parishes met in Fresno on September 6, 1927, and elected Bishop Karekin Khach'adourian of Trebizond, Turkey, as their Primate. They informed the Holy See of their decision.[3] Subsequently the creation of the Western Diocese in California was made official by a Pontifical decree issued on November 28, 1927. It stated:

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[1] "Kalifornioy Hayots' Arhachnortaraně" ("The Diocese of the Armenians of California"), *The Pharos*, April 28, 1928, p. 76.

[2] *Adenakrout'iwn*, Boston, September 6-7, 1925, pp. 21-22.

[3] *Twentieth Anniversary of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Cross Church*, Fresno, 1922-1942, p. 28.

> With this Pontifical encyclical, we hereby establish and announce the independent Diocese of the Armenian Church in California, and confirm the election of a Primate by the Diocesan Convention in the person of our spiritual son, Bishop Karekin Khach'adourian.[1]

3. The Primacy of Bishop Karekin Khach'adourian (1928-1932)

Bishop Khach'adourian was recognized as a dedicated churchman, an eloquent preacher, and a tireless man of letters as well as an authority in Patristics and in Church History. Besides his scholarly attributes, he possessed sagacity and a sense of leadership and administrative talents. Born in Trebizond, Turkey, on November 6, 1880, he went, at the age of sixteen, to the Mkhitarist Seminary of San Lazaro in Venice, Italy, where he studied for five years. He later returned and resumed his studies at the well-known Armenian Orthodox Seminary of Armash in Eastern Turkey. There he received his theological training and religious background under the watchful eye of the scholarly dean, Bishop Eghishē Tourian.

In 1901 Khach'adourian received his ordination to the celibate priesthood at the hand of this eminent churchman. For a number of years he served in a pastoral capacity in various churches in Istanbul and other cities of Turkey. He edited numerous religious publications. In 1919 he was named Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Trebizond, and in 1922 he was consecrated a Bishop by Kēork V, Catholicos of All Armenians.

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[1] "Hayrabedgan Gontag Kalifornioy Arhachnortin Oughghouadz" ("Pontifical Encyclical Addressed to the Primate of California"), The Pharos, II (September, 1928), 179-180.

Prior to accepting the invitation of the California Diocese and his embarkation to America, Bishop Khach'adourian sought the confirmation of the Holy See. A letter forwarded to him on November 24, 1927, by the Chancellor of the Holy See, Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian, assured him of the Pontiff's confirmation. The Catholicos, in his encyclical, exhorted the new Primate in the following words:

> And we admonish you to strive to strengthen the relationship between the two prelacies and administrative bodies of the respective Dioceses of the Armenians in America... and to solicit the mutual cooperation of each, morally, spiritually and in brotherhood for the glory and welfare of the Holy Apostolic Church of Armenia and as a consolation to us.[1]

Bishop Khach'adourian arrived in New York on April 25, 1928, and was met by a delegation headed by Father Mamprē Kalfaian, pastor of the Holy Cross Church of Union City, New Jersey. On the following Sunday he celebrated Divine Liturgy and preached in memory of the martyrs of April 24, 1915.[2]

On May 8, 1928, Bishop Khach'adourian and Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian met formally during a Central Executive

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[1] "Hayrabedgan Gontag," The Pharos, II (September, 1928), 179-180.

[2] "Zhamanoum Ew Bashdōnagan Entounelout'iwn Kalifornioy Hayots' Arhachnortin" ("Arrival and Reception in Honor of the Primate of California"), Baikar, May 16, 1928.

Committee meeting in Boston. The Pontifical encyclicals were read, which confirmed the credentials of Bishop Khach'adourian as the Primate of the Western Diocese. The two primates, with their colleagues, spent their time in discussing fundamental issues pertaining to religious and administrative duties mutually important to the two dioceses.[1]

On June 24, 1928, at a solemn ceremony in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Fresno, California, the Pontifical encyclical was read by Father Vartan Kasbarian, which officially confirmed the first Primate and the Western Diocese as an independent jurisdiction in North America.[2]

The four years of the incumbency of Bishop Khach'adourian (from June 1, 1928 to June 30, 1932) were a period of analysis, experience and preliminaries, as he himself characterised it in his report issued on the occasion of his resignation as Primate.

In 1938 Bishop Khach'adourian was sent as Patriarchal Legate by Khorēn I, Catholicos of All Armenians, to the Armenian Diocese of South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1950 he was elected Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Turkey, an office which he filled with distinction until his death on June 27, 1961.

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[1] Dēr Hovhannēsian, "Hasdadoum Kalifornioy Hayots' Arhachnortagan Vijagin" ("Institution of the Diocese of the Armenians"), Baikar, June 10, 1928.

[2] "Hay Geank'ě Freznoyi Mēch" ("Armenian Life in Fresno"), The Gotchnag, July 21, 1928.

Patriarch Khach'adourian was a linguist, proficient in classical Greek, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, and Armenian. He edited various periodicals and authored a score of religious works in Armenian, which include two volumes of The Light of the World in Armenia (1936; 1939), and a new translation of The New Testament (the four gospels) into modern Armenian (1939).

A dedicated servant of the church, he established the Holy Cross Theological Seminary in Constantinople in 1953, which was to be one of his crowning achievements. However, the school was closed in 1972. His passing in 1961 removed from the Armenian ecclesiastical scene the last living representative of a generation of churchmen who were known as "Armashagans" (graduates of the once flourishing Seminary in Turkey now in ruins as a result of the destruction and deportations of 1915).

The successors of Bishop Khach'adourian as Primates in the Western Diocese were Bishop Mamprē Kalfaian (1942-1946), Bishop Shnorhk' Kalousdian (1953-1956, later to become Patriarch of Istanbul), Bishop Papkēn Varjabedian (1957-1962), Bishop Torkom Manougian (1962-1966, later to become Primate of the Eastern Diocese of North America), Bishop Eghishē Simonian (1966-1970) and Bishop Vach'ē Hovsēp'ian (1971-). The Diocese, originally located in Fresno, was transferred to Los Angeles in 1957. By this time there were thirteen churches and some fifteen clergymen in the Western Diocese, which, like the Eastern Diocese, was administered by a Primate and a Diocesan Council.

I. Resignation of Primate Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian

It became increasingly apparent that the differences between the Primate of New York and his critics were too deep for reconciliation. The criticisms levelled against the Primate concerned his personality which was considered too harsh and uncompromising. His authoritarian manner with his co-workers in the Central Executive Committee had divided the membership into sympathetic and opposing groups. During the Diocesan Convention which met in Boston from May 15 to 16, 1927, a letter was presented for consideration by Armenag Nazar of Boston, a member of the Central Executive Committee. He pointed out the grievances he and others had experienced because of the Primate's behavior. Moreover, in the letter Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian was accused of negligence in attending the meetings of the Central Executive Committee and with regard various duties at the Diocesan office. The Archbishop was also charged with disobedience toward the Pontiff.[1]

A vote taken with regard to these criticisms gave support to the Primate. The protesting group, however, introduced a motion of censure of the Primate, urging the formation of a special committee to investigate the actions of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian. In the event that the resolution was not carried, they asserted that they would refer the matter to the Pontiff at Ēchmiadzin. While the motion was under discussion, those delegates who protested walked out, with the exception of one of its signatories. The motion was defeated by majority vote.[1]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwnner, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp. 10-11.

Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian presented a detailed report of his accomplishments. He put great emphasis on the fact that the Diocese was witnessing an era of spiritual regeneration and that, during his primacy, he had consecrated eleven churches. In addition, several other parishes were also making efforts to build their own churches. He observed that "a few years ago the luxury of having our own churches was considered nonsense. Today, this is not only considered a luxury, but a necessity, to stem the tide of assimilation and to preserve our national heritage."[2]

Despite the impressiveness of his report, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian appeared to have lost his mandate. No reconciliation was in sight. In the months preceding the Diocesan Convention of October, 1928, differences over key issues and controversial subjects, such as the new Constitution, the altar stone, and the relationship of the lay and religious members of the Central Executive Committee, became more strenuous. Armenag Nazar wrote,

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[1] One should not overlook the political overtones of this conflict. The majority support the Archbishop received undoubtedly was provided by delegates of Tashnag orientation.

[2] Adenakrout'iwnner, May 15-16, 1927, p. 43.

> I know that His Grace does not have a policy of replying to questions set forth by the press. He reads them and is affected, but he remains silent... because he often finds that there is no other way. In view of this, I repeat my question.[1]

On August 14, 1928, the Primate submitted his resignation to the Central Executive Committee, stating irreconcilable differences as his reason.

The next Diocesan Convention, convened on October 7, 1928, at St. Illuminator Church in New York, officially received the resignation of the Primate in absentia. Excerpts of the resignation read as follows:

> It has been, and is, our desire to serve and execute our work until such time as we feel that our work is not to be detrimental to the church. In consideration of this, we no longer feel that our extended tenure in the office of Primacy of the Armenian Church in America can be of any further value.[2]

A heated discussion followed the reading of the resignation. It was learned that two major issues had created strong tensions between the Primate and the lay members of the Central Executive Committee. These were the use of the altar stones, of which the Primate had disapproved, and the drafting of a new Constitution intended to limit the powers of the Primate. The Religious Council of the Central Executive Committee gave its support to the Primate. Both sides had presented their cases to the Pontiff at Ēchmiadzin, requesting Pontifical decision on the matter.[1]

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[1] A. N. Nazar, "Orouan Khntirner" ("Issues of the Times"), Baikar, February 4, 1928.

[2] Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Adenakrout'iwnner ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), New York, N.Y., October 7-8, 1928, pp. 9-10.

In a letter dated May 8, 1928, the Central Executive Committee requested permission from the Pontiff to use altar stones in performing Divine Liturgy in either non-consecrated Armenian Churches or in non-Armenian Churches. Meanwhile on May 5, 1928, the same Executive Committee had sent a second letter to Ēchmiadzin requesting the confirmation of the Constitution. The Religious Council, on the other hand, had appealed to Ēchmiadzin on May 22, 1928, to prevent the use of the altar stones which they considered to be against the tradition of the Armenian Church.[2] In another letter, dated June 30, 1928, the Religious Council informed the Pontiff that the new Constitution had drastically circumvented the authority, not only of the Primate, but that of the Religious Council as well, placing it in a much inferior level to that of the Central Executive Committee. The Central Executive

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[1] Ibid.

[2] It is probable, however, that Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian maintained his opposition to the use of the portable altar stones to deter the continued use of rented facilities which threatened the permanence of an Armenian Church established in populous Armenian areas.

Committee criticized Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian for intervening with the Holy See to obstruct approval of their appeal.

After hearing both sides of the argument, the Diocesan Convention considered a motion presented by Maghak' Bērbērian of West Pullman, Illinois, concerning the resignation of the Primate. "The Diocesan Convention... with heartfelt regrets, in accordance with his wishes, accepts the resignation of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian and expresses its gratitude for his seven years of service."[1] The majority of the delegates voted in favor of the action and the matter was closed.

Once again a Primate had resigned and gone into retirement. His entire career was left to the judgment of history. He was thought by many to have been an authoritarian traditionalist and, therefore, incompatible to the liberal atmosphere of America. However, he was a man of strong principles and convictions. He had wished to leave the office of Primacy with his job completed and with a clear conscience, and with the impression that what he had done was in the best interests of his Church and people in whom he had invested his love, belief, and devotion. His opponents could not strike a compromise with him. Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian foresaw no avenue by which to persuade or convince them to concede to his convictions. With his resignation a controversy ended and the reputation of still another Primate was ruined.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwnner, New York, N.Y., October 7-8, 1928, p. 11.

In the late twenties, the political activities and the formulae of partisan groups set the stage for more controversies in the Armenian Church, plunging the entire Armenian community and churches into the fiercest ecclesiastical storm of their history.

J. Expansion of Churches

The increase in the number of churches during the Primacy of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian reached ten, a record that was never again duplicated during any seven-year period in the history of the Armenian Church in America. During this period of church-founding zeal, several church communities also sprouted, these including West Philadelphia, Detroit, Lawrence, Binghampton, and Watertown, Massachusetts. The proliferation was mainly due to the fact that the Armenian immigrant had decided to make America his permanent home. Even small communities built churches. The increase in the number of churches throughout the twenties was also a manifestation of the growing need for spiritual guidance. According to Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian the Armenian Diocese was witnessing an era of spiritual regeneration. The Armenian immigrants, in spite of unemployment, or the fear of it, erected their church edifices with great toil and sacrifice. These edifices meant more than just a beautiful and distinctive house of worship, but symbolized the Armenian Christian heritage in which they preserved their national identity.

The three churches which are not discussed in this section on Expansion of Churches are Saint Illuminator Church in New York, already discussed earlier in this Chapter, page 335 ; Holy Saviour Church, West Pullman, Illinois, of which there is no information available other than it was acquired in 1924 for a price of $3,500; and Saint Peter's Church in Troy, New York which has been discussed in Chapter VI.[1]

1. Holy Cross Church, Los Angeles, California

The Armenian immigrants who first came to the United States found it preferable to live in the cities, where they could find employment and enjoy the companionship of compatriots, sharing memories of the "old country." Being a man of the soil, the Armenian brought with him preserverance and industriousness, qualities which were prevalent in the hardy Armenian provincial stock. Some sought the quietude so characteristic of their pastoral homeland, even if it were to be in isolated and distant areas, so they moved westward. Armenians first settled in Fresno, California, where they engaged in agricultural pursuits, especially in vineyards and orchards. They introduced new fruits to the New World--such as apricots and pomegranates. By 1890, a handful of Armenians had settled in Fresno, which was then a small village. The settlers of the Armenian colony of Los Angeles came from the expanding Fresno population. It was not until 1900 that Armenians began to settle in numbers in Los Angeles. These immigrants were primarily occupied with the rug industry. Between 1906-1908 some fifty Armenians went from Fresno to Los Angeles. These earliest arrivals were forced to become petty street traders. The death in 1907 of the venerable Catholicos Khrimian Hayrig, endearingly called "Father," prompted the Armenians to organize themselves into a religious community in Los Angeles.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwnner, New York, N.Y., October 7-8, 1928, p. 30.

In 1907 a committee of four men was formed, having as its goal the building of a church. For some time Father Sahag Nazarēt'ian, a convert from the Uniate (Armenian Roman Catholic) Mkhitarist Brotherhood of San Lazarroin Venice, provided the community with spiritual assistance. For religious services, Armenians in Los Angeles were given the use of Episcopalian Churches. Another priest, Father T'ēotoros Isahagian, also provided the Armenians with pastoral services. The presence of these two clergymen in the same community and the backing they received from their supporters generated rivalry and created an unhappy situation in the community. Fortunately, the community pulled itself out of the controversy in 1914 through the efforts of the Primate, Father Arsēn Vehouni. After that Armenian clergy were invited periodically to celebrate Divine Liturgy and sought to meet the religious needs of the Armenians. Two brothers, Arhak'el and Astēr Arhak'elian, offered preaching in Armenian on religious and moral themes.

In 1917, a layman, Mihran Melik'ian was ordained into the sacred priesthood by the hand of Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian who renamed him Adom.[1] Father Adom was to look after the welfare of the Armenian community in Los Angeles and was to be instrumental in the task of building a church. The need for a church building was apparent. He was obliged to celebrate the Liturgy in various places, even one Christmas on the stairs of a hall. This prompted action from the pastor and Church Trustees.

In January of 1921 at the annual membership meeting, it was proposed to build a church. A Building Committee was created consisting of Krikor Altounian, Antranig Kapriēlian and Khach'adour Izmirlian. The same night, owing to the enthusiasm of those gathered, five thousand dollars were collected. A piece of land on East 20th Street and Maple Avenue was purchased with the consent of the Primate, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian. Other Armenian communities were also called upon to support the efforts of the Armenians in Los Angeles to build their church. On March 26th, 1922, the ceremony of the laying of the foundation of the church was conducted by Father Vartan Kasbarian. The building of the church was completed in 1925. The consecration ceremonies were held in 1923 (no specific date available) by Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, the Primate. The new church was called the Church of the Holy Cross.[1]

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[1] According to custom of the Armenian Church, the person who receives ordination is given a new name by the Bishop. This signifies that through ordination the candidate becomes a new man.

2. Holy Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

Armenians had begun to settle in Boston in the 1880s. The community began to grow with an influx of Armenian immigrants from various provinces and towns of Cilicia, Harpoot, Ainteb, and Marash in Turkey. In the early 1890's the first board of trustees was organized. For many years the Armenians in Boston were without their own house of worship.

Visiting Armenian clergymen were called upon to serve the religious needs of the community and held services, using the facilities of local Episcopalian churches. Often, the sacraments and rites were administered in homes and various rented halls. The reason given for a late start in building a church in Boston was shared also by other Armenian communities. Most Armenians immigrating to the New World had not intended to make it their permanent home. These immigrants considered themselves transients until the 1920s when political and economic upheavals in the homeland convinced them to remain in this country rather than return. It was no insignificant factor that Armenian immigrants sent money to their relatives in the old country for their support, while, at the same time, caring for their own needs here with relatively limited financial resources. Also, various fund raising campaigns conducted by different Armenian organizations in the face of national needs and emergencies, urged Armenian immigrants to assist their unfortunate brethren overseas by way of monetary contributions.

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[1] Seropian, "Kalifornioy Hay Kaghout'ě, *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, pp. 71-74.

Several clergymen provided spiritual guidance to the Armenians in the Boston area. The first of these pastors was Father Khat Markarian, who served the parish from 1897 to 1898. The pastorate of Father Markarian was marked by an intense controversy which took place between him and a leading layman in the community, Lewon Selian. The latter was disposed toward a rapprochement with the Protestant Episcopalian Churches, a desire which was not fully defined by him and which left Father Markarian and other parishoners with the suspicion of proselytization by those non-Armenian churches.

As a result of this conflict, Father Markarian resigned and was called to be pastor of the Armenians at New York.

Until 1911, Fathers Hagop Parech'anian and Sarkis Tashjian served the community as spiritual leaders. From 1911-1916, Archbishop Moushegh Seropian, the former Primate of Adana, Turkey, took over the pastorship of the Armenians in Boston. In 1913 and in 1914, Archbishop Seropian was joined by Father Shahē Kasbarian and then by Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian who served the Armenian community.

The credit of organizing the Armenian religious community of Boston on a more solid foundation belongs to Father Shahē Kasbarian who was called to this duty in 1916. In 1917, when Father Kasbarian was elected as Locum-Tenens of the Diocese, he continued to hold his pastorate in Boston.

Father Kasbarian saved no effort in attempts to convince his constituents of the necessity of owning their own church. Rented churches and halls were inconvenient. Thus the problem of having a church became imperative. At a meeting of the Board of Church Trustees on May 27th, 1921, he was able to have the Trustees adopt his proposal. The Board of Trustees, then, submitted this matter to the attention of the Membership Meeting of the parish. In this meeting representatives of various surrounding cities and towns, which were under the administrative jurisdiction of the Boston Church community, took part. The Membership Meeting acted upon this proposal favorably and appointed a committee to search for a suitable church structure. After several weeks of searching and negotiating, a former Episcopalian Church and the adjacent house on 397-401 Shawmut Avenue, Boston, the latter then used as a public library, were considered suitable for the Armenian community. The Membership Meeting on September 28, 1921, approved the purchase of the property for $27,000. It was not until January 1, 1922, that the church with the adjacent house became the property of the Armenian community. From January, 1923, the church underwent considerable renovation for several months, especially rebuilding the interior to the liturgical needs of the Armenian Church. The church was consecrated on November 11, 1923, by the Primate, Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, assisted by Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian, Father Shahē Kasbarian and Father Eghiazar Ashjian. The edifice was named the Holy Trinity Church. The Diocesan headquarters were transferred from Worcester to Boston and were relocated in the Holy Trinity Church. This parish church ministered to the spiritual needs of the Armenians in Greater Boston until 1961. The church was then sold, due largely to the exodus of parishoners to the suburbs. On September 17, 1961, the Primate, Archbishop Sion Manougian, consecrated a new church structure at the corner of Brattle and Sparks Streets near Harvard Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts.[1]

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[1] Thirtieth Anniversary Souvenir Book, Armenian Holy Trinity Church of Boston, Massachusetts, 1923-1952; Tenth Anniversary Souvenir Book, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston, 1961-1971.

3. Holy Resurrection Church, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The first Armenian settlers came to South Milwaukee in 1910.[1] Most were from the province of Caesarea, Turkey. The first Board of Church Trustees in South Milwaukee was organized in 1912 and itinerant priests provided religious nurture to the Armenian community until 1924. For religious services the Armenians were allowed use of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church.

In 1924 a Church Building Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Hagop Eělanjian. In the same year the Zion Evangelist Church with its adjacent lot was purchased at a price of $3,200. After complete renovations, the Church was consecrated by Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, assisted by several clergymen, on October 3-4, 1924. Father Vartan Tawit'ian served as first pastor of the parish until 1926.

No other information is available concerning this Church.

4. Saint Sahag and Mesrob Church, Reedley, California

The beginning of the Armenian colony in Reedley and the Wahtoke districts of California dates back to the 1890s when a small band of immigrants lived there and were engaged in agriculture. One of the first activities of the Armenians in this region was the building of a small library in 1909, housing chiefly Armenian publications in order to encourage reading and self-education, inasmuch as most of the immigrants were unfamiliar with the English language. In 1912 the community managed to operate an Armenian weekday school for children. On April 12 of the same year, the Church Trustees were elected at a meeting presided over by Father Vartan Kasbarian, pastor of the Fresno parish. This body was to oversee the religious needs of the community and eventually was instrumental in the building of a church.

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[1] Ashjian, pp. 234-242; Adenakrout'iwnner, New York, October 7-8, 1928, p. 28.

In 1916 the community constructed a hall which they called Saint Mesrob. Sunday morning services were held here, the Divine Liturgy occasionally being celebrated by visiting priests. However, in 1922 the hall was destroyed by fire. This incident prompted the Armenian communities of Reedly and Wahtoke to combine their efforts for the building of a church.

At this time Reedley was experiencing rapid industrial growth and many Armenians had already left Wahtoke to make their homes in Reedley. Religious services were again held either in rented halls or outdoors. Many times the Armenians were allowed the use of the facilities of Protestant Episcopalian Churches. However, a serious conflict which developed between the Episcopalians and Armenians during a funeral service convinced the Armenians of the necessity of having their own church.[1]

The first steps toward this end were taken on January 18, 1923, at a meeting held at the home of Zarēt' Nōrōyian. A Building Committee was chosen which eventually enlarged its membership to eleven, with Kasbar Aslanian as chairman. In 1924 the Building Committee purchased the Reedley Methodist Church for $3,500. After undergoing necessary renovations, the building was ready for church services.

Consecration services were held on November 23, 1924. Father Vartan Kasbarian of Fresno, assisted by other clergymen, performed the services. The Church was called Saint Sahag and Mesrob Church. The first pastor was Father Khach'ig Krhouzian of Detroit, Michigan. He assumed the pastorate in 1925 and served the parish until 1929. In later years the church underwent further renovations and consequently was rededicated on February 7, 1954.

5. Saint Mesrob Church, Racine, Wisconsin

The first three Armenians to settle in Racine came from Waukegan, Illinois, in 1892. They were Hagop Markarian, Awedis Dēr Margosian, and Khach'ig T'orosian who had migrated from the village of Khouylou in the province of Harpoot, Turkey.[1] Soon other compatriots followed them and settled in the area of State Street and Douglas Avenue. Early in the 1900s the Armenian community of Racine saw the growth of political, social, compatriotic, cultural, and other ethnic-oriented organizations. The vast majority of the Armenian community in Racine had migrated from the village of Tomarza, in the province of Caesarea in Turkey.

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[1] No detailed information is available concerning this incident. The only reference to the conflict is found in a memorial booklet by Vahe Haig. Vahe Haig, Memorial Booklet for the Commemoration of the Thirtieth Anniversary of St. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, Reedley, California 1924-1954 (Fresno: Kasparian Press, 1954), p. 19.

The first formal religious service that the Armenian immigrants had in Racine was when in 1914 a visiting clergyman from New York, Father Mesrob Sahagian, celebrated Divine Liturgy in a rented hall on State Street.

In the following year an unofficial Board of Trustees consisting of five members was formed, with H. P'oladian as chairman. Until 1918 this body tended the administrative needs of the community in conjunction with the parish of Chicago, Illinois; thereafter they became the official governing religious body of the Armenian community in Racine. A local Episcopalian Church offered use of its facilities to the Armenians on Sunday afternoons. By 1922, following an increase in the number of immigrants, the Racine Armenians separated themselves as a community from the Chicago community and formed their own parish together with three other small Wisconsin communities; South Milwaukee, Carolville, and Knaucha.[1] Father Tawit' Awedisian was called upon to serve as their temporary pastor. A year later, Father Vartan Tawit'ian was invited to assume permanent pastorship of Racine. Through the initiative of the new pastor the Armenian community in Racine received strong impetus to acquire their own church. Subsequently, at a gathering the Armenians pledged to support such an endeavor. During a visit to Racine on October 12, 1924, the Primate encouraged such planning and also formed a Building Committee headed by Giwlbēng Giwlbēngian, a lawyer. In 1925, the Building Committee furthered the dream of the community by the purchase of a Danish Lutheran Church located on the corner of State and Wilson Streets in Racine, for $18,000.

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[1] For further details concerning the Armenians in Racine and the development of the Parish-Church, consult Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' Ew Badmout'iwn, pp. 215-225; Toros Madaghjian, Dasnehinkameag Giragnoreay Tbrots'i Sourp Mesrob Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy, Reysin, Ouisk'ansin ("Fifteenth Anniversary of the Sunday School of St. Mesrob Armenian Church of Racine, Wisconsin") (New York: Gotchnag Press, 1958), p. 7; Adenakrout'iwnner, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp. 29-30.

After the building had undergone necessary renovations, the Church was consecrated on December 25, 1925, by Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, assisted by the pastor, Father Tawit'ian, and Father Khach'ig Krhouzian, pastor of St. John Church in Detroit. The Church was named after Saint Mesrob, a fifth century scholar and church father who is credited with the development of the Armenian alphabet.

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[1] Ashjian, p. 216; Madaghjian, Dasnehinkameag, p. 8; Adankrout'iwnner, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp. 27-28.

6. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, Chicago, Illinois

During the 1890s the Armenian community in Chicago was comprised of about three hundred immigrants; most of them were young males of the working class; a minority of them were students.[1]

Armenians in the Chicago area were slow in acquiring their own parish church because of intensive factional feuding and a tragic degree of dissension, which made the community a site for incessant tension, discord, and quarreling. Initially the Armenian communities of West Pullman, Racine, South Milwaukee, and Milwaukee were all under the administrative jurisdiction of the Chicago parish. One by one, these communities succeeded in acquiring their own church structures, leaving the Chicago community to settle their differences.[2]

Although many clergymen had visited Chicago, no significant attempts were made on their part to encourage the Armenians of the area to develop a church community.[3]

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[1] Bedros A. Keljik, Armenian-American Sketches (New York: Yeprab Press, 1944), p. 26.

[2] Adenakrout'iwnner, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, p. 27.

[3] Hrach' Amadouni, Shikagoyi Hayasdaneayts' Arhak'elagan Sourp Krikor Lousaworich' Egeghets'woy Badmout'iwne, 1925-1940 ("The Story of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church of Chicago"), p. 1.

Only in 1915 did the parish begin to show signs of organization through the efforts of the Reverend Vahram Nazarēt'ian who had recently come to the United States from Constantinople. He served the parish until 1918 and was succeeded by Father Eghishe Kalch'anjian who remained in Chicago until 1925.[1]

St. Gregory the Illuminator parish came into being in 1926 as a direct result of the labors of the Reverend Vahan Giwldalian who had come from California in 1925 to assume the pastorship.[2] From the beginning Father Giwldalian displayed great zeal in convincing the parishoners to undertake a campaign to purchase a church building. A drive was spear-headed by Father Giwldalian. On September 4, 1925, during a meeting between representatives of a Lutheran Church and the Armenians, a purchase price of $25,000 for the edifice located at the corner of Hague and Augusta Boulevard, was agreed upon. Samouel Donian, a prominent benefactor in the community, made the purchase of the church possible, through a substantial contribution which was used as the down payment. As the community experienced financial difficulties, Father Giwldalian, accompanied by Donian, made house to house solicitations in support of the church. The pledges amounted to $12,945.00.

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[1] In 1943 Father Nazarēt'ian assumed the pastorate of his former parish. He remained in Chicago until 1953, when he retired to Miami, Florida.

[2] *Adenakrout'iwnner*, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, p. 28; Amadouni, *Shikagoyi Hayasdaneayts' Egeghets'woy Badmout'iwne*, p. 2; *Consecration and Dedication of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church*, Chicago, Illinois, October 4, 1964.

The parish was unable to meet these pledges and the banks were reluctant to make loans. Once again Donian secured the necessary sum. He also raised the funds for the interior renovations of the church, including the baptismal font, the altar, and other liturgical facilities. On February 20, 1926, the church was consecrated by the Primate, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, and was named St. Gregory the Illuminator Church. Samouēl Donian was given the honor of being the patron of the newly consecrated church.[1]

7. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The United Armenian community of Greater Philadelphia came into existence as an organized parish on September 30, 1917, when St. Sahag and Mesrob Church was consecrated. By 1923 the Armenian community of greater Philadelphia had increased sizably due to continued immigration. It soon became apparent that a single church in that metropolitan area was not sufficient to administer to the religious needs of the widely scattered Armenians. It was decided by the community members to reorganize into two parishes, one in North Philadelphia, the other in West Philadelphia. The decision was reached at a meeting in the Saint Sahag and Mesrob Church in September, 1923. The Primate, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, consented to the resolution.[1] After the approval of the Primate, the church on Broad and Pike Streets was sold for $30,000 on October 4, 1923.

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[1] In 1947 the church was heavily damaged by fire. Once again, with a spirit of devotion, the members campaigned to reconstruct the church. The Armenians used this church until June, 1964, when they moved into a new building on West Diversey Boulevard in Chicago. The new church was consecrated by Archbishop Sion Manougian on October 4, 1964.

In the interim between the sale of the church and acquiring the new edifice (1923-1925), Armenians in the North Philadelphia section of the city held their church services in the Protestant Episcopal Churches at 18th and Diamond and 12th and Diamond Streets.[2] The pastor, Father Eghishe Kalch'anjian, held his parish together and supervised its activities. He also urged his parishoners to embark upon the drive to own a new church.

In 1925 Armenians in Philadelphia once again considered acquiring a new church to meet the spiritual needs of both parishes. At a Membership Meeting in May, 1925, presided over by the Primate, the possibilities of purchasing a church at 6006 Walnut Street in Philadelphia, for the price of $42,000 was discussed.[1] The North Philadelphians refused to support this proposal because of geographical distance. The next step was to finalize the separation of the Armenian community in Philadelphia into two parishes--North and West. Their decision received the blessing and approval of the Primate and Diocese.

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[1] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' Ew Badmout'iwn, pp. 188-190, 195-196 ; Consecration and Dedication of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, September 18, 1966.

[2] Armenians in West Philadelphia, in the meantime, were allowed use of the Protestant Episcopal Church, St. George's Church, located on 61st Street and Hazel Avenue.

Because of the separation, the North Philadelphians were given their share of $15,000 from the sale of their former church, Saint Sahag and Saint Mesrob in 1923. The North Philadelphians, now a separate parish, formed their own Board of Church Trustees and organized a Building Committee. For the next two years, Armenians were allowed to use Protestant Episcopal Churches in North Philadelphia. On March 2, 1927, a church located at 16th and Oxford Streets was purchased for $55,000 by the Building Committee. An additional $10,000 was allocated for the renovation of the church. Some two hundred Armenian families were living within a ten block vicinity of the church. The pastor was Father Nshan P'ap'azian.

The church was consecrated on April 1, 1928, by Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian and was named St. Gregory the Illuminator Church. Frank Nahigian was honored as Godfather, due to his substantial donation to the Church fund.

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[1] Consecration of Saint Sahag and Mesrob Church, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, November 24, 1963, p. 26.

As a result of a schism in the Diocese in 1933, several churches became the center of controversy between those loyal to the Diocese and those sympathetic to the Tashnags. In a few cases the Tashnags triumphed. In some parishes, as in the case of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Philadelphia both sides claimed legal possession of the edifice. In this instance the matter was taken to court. In 1935 the Armenian community in North Philadelphia lost its church to the dissident group. Between 1934 and 1940 the community in North Philadelphia worshipped in different churches under the pastorship of Father Arsēn T'orosian. In 1941, the North Philadelphia community purchased a new church on the southwest corner of Marshall Street and Susquehanna Avenue at a cost of $40,000. This time the church was consecrated as the Holy Trinity Church on December 26-27, 1942, by the Primate Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian. Aram Attarian served as the Godfather.

However, the strange story of this community was not yet completed. On December 1, 1964, the Holy Trinity Church was totally destroyed by fire. Once again, the Armenian community faced difficulties. On September 18, 1966, a new church was consecrated in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, by the Primate, Bishop Torkom Manougian, formerly a pastor of the church (1946-1952). Again Aram Attarian served as Godfather.[1]

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[1] Consecration and Dedication, Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, September 18, 1966.

K. Summary and Conclusion

A number of disparate developments stand out in the Church history of the twenties. Clearly this was a time of economic crisis for the Church and her communicants. Indeed, no less than ten new churches were established. This meant that, whatever the impact of the financial squeeze, it was not serious enough to check the impressive proliferation of parishes. Even more remarkable was the fact that the growth was occurring at a time of heightened intra-communal crisis.

The two main causes of crisis were identified as the personality and policies of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian and the political conflict between the Tashnags and the Rhamgavars which had its origin in the Sovietization of Armenia, in November,1920. Soon after his arrival in the new country, it became obvious that, despite his educational and intellectual gifts, the Archbishop did not have the pragmatism and flexibility to deal with the everyday challenges of an immigrant church. The rough tactics used by the "gutter"-level Armenian political bosses were unknown to this intellectual and proud monastic. His withdrawal from office was tantamount to accepting failure.

More serious was the inter-party conflict which made the churches the main arenas of political debate and struggle. But while Armenia's Sovietization had increased the political struggle, thereby presumably retarding Church growth, it also had a beneficial influence. To be sure, Armenia's Sovietization meant the indefinite postponement of hopes for a return to the native land. The decade of the twenties brought to many Armenians the sad realization that there was no going back for the foreseeable future, hence the need to survive in the new country and the need to build a more permanent societal base which included the Church.

In these unusual circumstances a new generation of Armenian-Americans came to maturity--the first such generation in the new land. The crisis environment in which they found themselves was to culminate in the tragedy of 1933, scarring their young psyches and assuring the continuation of divisiveness and political conflict into future generations. Yet, before the act of assassination, the historian has to account for three eventful years which can best be described as the lull before the storm.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTERIM YEARS (1928-1931)

During the three years after the resignation of Primate Dēr Hovhannēsian in 1928 to the time of the election of Archbishop Ghewont Tourian as the new Primate on January 31, 1931, the Diocese was governed consecutively by two Locum-Tenentes. These were Father Serovpē Nershabouh (1928-1930) of Saint Illuminator Church and Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian (1930-1931) of Holy Cross Church, both from New York City. No outstanding achievements were expected through the leadership of these two churchmen. Instead, they were simply requested to supervise the routine tasks and regular business of the Diocese, while attending to their pastoral duties in their respective churches and communities.

At the same time, new trends in Armenian national life were apparent throughout the diaspora. The differences among the Armenian political organizations, including their differing attitudes toward Soviet Armenia and Ēchmiadzin, stirred up enmities which were to lead to future flames of bitterness. The two unyielding forces of the drama were the uncompromising political stances of the Tashnag and Rhamgavar Parties. In spite of these political activities, the Armenian Church in America was able to achieve a relative degree of physical and spiritual growth, largely through church youth organizations which ran under such names as Brotherhood of the Armenian Church and Sons and Daughters of the Armenian Church. The task was the harder for this was also the time of the Great Depression which crippled America economically in the late twenties and early thirties.[1]

Armenians carried through their church building programs and contracted heavy debts, ignoring the bitter risks of foreclosure. Political events of the twenties in the Armenian homeland and the serious situation in Turkey diminished the little hope that remained of returning to the homeland. Partial assimilation was inevitable as Armenians now accepted the fact that America was to be their permanent home. The younger generation was coming of age with their primary and immediate loyalty to America and not to a distant and almost legendary land. With the growth of the Church, the Armenian youth no longer were exposed to the necessity of attending non-Armenian churches. Many of the youth became members of new Armenian Churches. Other youth, who did not, simply preferred not to change their denominational preferences. Unfortunately, Church leaders and their authority often lagged behind the needs and progressive theories of the time. The Diocese set for itself great goals but lacked the strength and backing to see them through.

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[1] Krikor Kalousdian, "Khrakhouseli Sharzhoum Mě" ("An Encouraging Movement"), Baikar, September 30, 1928.

It should be mentioned that, notwithstanding this relative progress, a significant percentage of the early Armenians had already been integrated. The Armenian Church which functioned in large Armenian communities without any fundamental missionary motivation toward her "lost sheep" lost some of her members permanently.

A. Soviet-Ēchmiadzin Relations in a New Phase

If in the twenties Ēchmiadzin resisted the Communist assault, in the years from 1929-1932 she adjusted herself to the new regime and reached a compromise. Despite this compromise, the Communist campaign against the Armenian Church reached new heights and gave indications of still further intensification. The closing and confiscation of churches and the systematic liquidation of the ecclesiastical intelligensia continued. These particularly violent waves of persecution coincided with a purge within the party and of the non-Communist intellectuals of Armenia as well.[1] The Soviet Constitution of 1929 placed the Communist state in complete control of all propaganda media and made it a crime to propagate religion or to challenge atheism. The only freedom Christians were allowed was limited gatherings for worship.[2]

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[1] Bardizian, p. 40; Aghavni Eēgēnian, "Grōnk' ew Ēchmiadzin" ("Religion and Ēchmiadzin"), *The Gotchnag*, January 31, 1931, p. 131; Matossian, p. 151.

[2] Nicholas Zernov, *Eastern Christendom* (New York; G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1961), p. 214; Eēgēnian, "Grōnk' ew Ēchmiadzin", *The Gotchnag*, January 31, 1931, p. 139.

In short, Communist determination to eradicate religious belief was not intended to be carried out by a sudden blow, but instead it was forwarded gradually and systematically.

The Church finally succumbed, and the organization was weakened economically through seizure of her lands and holdings; her treasures allegedly were taken for famine relief. As a result, the Church and clergy became completely dependent upon alms. The Church's position vis-à-vis the government thus changed dramatically in the late twenties. Soviet authorities, once defied by the Church hierarchy in the early twenties, now were tolerated by these churchmen who even prayed in the churches for the regime. The Church had finally adjusted herself to the new political and social order of Armenia.

On the other hand, Armenian political thought in the diaspora was divided. More than in any other diaspora, it was in America that the differences of Armenian political interests had their strongest impact on the Armenian community and Church. The situation can best be described by presentation of certain data concerning several events and personalities dominant in this period.

The Tashnag Party became more and more anti-Soviet, and its emotional hostilities grew even stronger against Ēchmiadzin. The Tashnag Party was not reluctant to call those Armenians who gave their allegiance to Ēchmiadzin pro-Communists who "championed the Soviet Regime."[1] The Tashnag Party viewed Ēchmiadzin within a political context, while the non-Tashnag elements continued to regard Ēchmiadzin purely as an ecclesiastical institution.[2] Ferocious and slanderous editorials appeared in the Armenian press in America which did not pass unnoticed by ecclesiastical authorities at Ēchmiadzin. The Supreme Spiritual Council, on June 12, 1929, discussed the problem of the feuding factions in the diaspora, especially the position of the Tashnag Party toward Armenia and the Armenian Church. Following this session, a circular was issued by the Supreme Spiritual Council directed to all Armenian Dioceses. The circular was scornful of clergymen who were reluctant to stem anti-Soviet propaganda conducted by the Tashnag machinery. Excerpts from the document read as follows:

> The Armenian Church of Holy Ēchmiadzin in the course of her historical existence, has always kept herself aloof from political and factional feuds. Today, she is conducting her same policy. However, despite the fact that there are Tashnag political leaders who have attempted to render churches and church assemblies into political podiums, have carried on anti-Soviet propaganda, and have assumed power in various parts of the diaspora, our spiritual leaders have not attempted to obstruct such activities. Taking also into consideration, that there are individuals and groups who are spreading subversive and defamatory remarks about Ēchmiadzin, we hereby

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[1] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 358; Ralph Lord Roy, Communism and the Churches (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1960), p. 406.

[2] This generalization may not necessarily apply to leaders of Armenian Communists in the diaspora or for Hnch'ag leaders with strong Marxist socialistic orientation.

> announce that Ēchmiadzin has no political affiliation or partisanship and is loyal and solicitous to the Soviet regime. We exhort the Primates and spiritual servants throughout all Sees to similarly remain loyal to the Soviet regime.[1]

One such controversial Diocesan Primate was Archbishop Nersēs Melik'-T'ankian of Azerbaijan, Persia, who was considered instrumental in spreading unpalatable news concerning Armenia and Ēchmiadzin.[2] This churchman had made it his business to find out as much about the affairs in Ēchmiadzin as he could. His findings by way of news releases and articles appeared in the Tashnag press under the pseudonym "Hay Mart" ("The Armenian Man"). In a recent issue of the Nayiri, a Beirut, Lebanon, Armenian literary publication, the editor makes the following notes concerning this churchman:

> The news reported by His Grace was unbelievable, and certain newspapers of the diaspora defined the information as fabricated, until, in the course of time, the obscurities vanished, and it became clear that the "Hay Mart" was indisputably a truthful correspondent ... unfortunately.[3]

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[1] "Ēchmiadzin Kerakoyn Khorhourti Shrchaperaganě T'emagal Arhachnortneroun" ("The Circular of the Supreme Council of Ēchmiadzin Addressed to Diocesan Primates"), *The Gotchnag*, August 31, p. 113.

[2] Archbishop Nersēs Melik'-T'ankian was born on March 16, 1866, in Prhnagot', Armenia and received his religious education at Keōrkian Seminary in Ēchmiadzin. In 1901 he was ordained a priest and in 1914 a Bishop. From 1913 until his death on September 28, 1948, he served as Primate of the city of Tabriz, Iran. Among his books the most noteworthy were two volumes: *Hay Egeghets'woy Irawounk'nerě* ("Rights of the Armenian Church") (2 vols.; Shousha, Armenia, 1903, 1905). For biographical data consult Vartan Dēmirjian, "Nersēs Ark'ebisgobos Melik'-T'ankian" ("Archbishop Nersēs Melik'-T'ankian"), *Nayiri*, September 30, 1973, p. 3.

[3] Editorial Notes, *Nayiri*, September 30, 1973, p. 3.

Archbishop Melik'-T'ankian was anathematized by Soviet authorities and Ēchmiadzin. He was also strongly criticized by the non-Tashnag press who seized every opportunity to discredit him. Armenian papers in America were at sword's point over the issue of Archbishop Melik'-T'ankian. The Hairenik rallied to his defense while the Baikar and Gotchnag opposed him.

Other news reported by "Hay Mart" concerned the state of the Church in Armenia, which revealed the wide-spread closing of churches, their conversion to movie houses, and the purge and imprisonment of clergy. Another alleged controversy reported by him centered upon the forced removal of the Catholicos in favor of Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian of Erevan who was considered acceptable by Soviet authorities. Ēchmiadzin immediately reacted to these rumors by categorically denying this report as a pure fabrication by the opponents of Ēchmiadzin, intended to discredit her.[1]

As the rift deepened between Archbishop Melik'-T'ankian and Ēchmiadzin, the Pontiff was forced to suspend him and ordered his immediate departure from Iran. He was given the the alternative of either returning to the Holy See in Armenia or entering into seclusion at St. James Monastery in Jerusalem.

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[1] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Shrchaperaganě" ("The Circular"), The Gotchnag, November 2, 1929, p. 1397.

However he disregarded the Pontifical order and remained in his Diocese as Prelate until his death on September 28, 1948.[1]

Moreover, the alleged imminent transferral of the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin from Armenia to a more politically secure country became a popular topic of discussion. According to this news, Archbishop Torkom Koushagian of Cairo, Egypt, was to depart for Jerusalem and have formal consultation with Archbishop Eghishē Tourian, the Armenian Patriarch, concerning the transferral of the See.[2] Ēchmiadzin denied the veracity of these rumors and counteracted them by denouncing the Tashnag Party for its ruthlessly unpatriotic and anti-Ēchmiadzin campaign. The communication issued on June 26, 1929, from the Holy See urged Armenians in the diaspora to refrain from partisan feuding and support Ēchmiadzin which had pledged its loyalty to the government of Armenia.[3] The Tashnag press reacted by charging that it was in response to pressure from the Soviet Secret Service that Ēchmiadzin had issued this document.

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[1] Lewon T'iwt'iwnjian, "Ēchmiadzin ew Adrbadagani T'emě" ("Ēchmiadzin and the Diocese of Azerbaijan"), Baikar, July 6, 1930.

[2] "Amenayn Hayots' Hayrabedout'iwně" ("The Catholicate of All Armenians"), Baikar, July 14, 1929.

[3] Kēork Chēōrēk'jian, "Shrchaperagan Ēchmiadzin Kerakoyn Khorhourti" ("Communication by the Supreme Spiritual Council of Ēchmiadzin"), Baikar, August 18, 1929.

Amidst this climate, Kēork V Vshdali, Catholicos of All Armenians, who was seriously ill and aged, died on May 9, 1930.[1] His popularity had been enormous. Multitudes attended his funeral services as an open demonstration of their devotion to the Church.

According to the news media, the Supreme Spiritual Council at Ēchmiadzin had announced the forthcoming National Ecclesiastical Assembly to be held on October 26, 1930, at the Holy See, wherein the successor of the late Catholicos was to be elected.[2]

According to by-laws issued by the late Catholicos himself on October 22, 1925, the National Ecclesiastical Assembly was given authority to proceed with the election of a new Pontiff no later than six months after the demise of the reigning Pontiff.[3] The American Diocese accordingly was informed that the Soviet authorities had no objection to convening the Assembly at Ēchmiadzin in the fall of 1930. A letter of the government, dated July 6, 1930, extended its confirmation of the request of the Supreme Spiritual Council for the

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[1] Catholicos Kēork V Sourēnian was born on August 28, 1847, in Tiflis, Georgia. He became bishop in 1882, was elected Catholicos on December 13, 1911, and was subsequently consecrated on July 1, 1912.

[2] "Harhachigay Gat'oghigosagan Endrout'iwnĕ" ("The Forthcoming Catholicossal Election"), The Gotchnag, August 30, 1930, p. 1095.

[3] "Azkayin Egeghets'agan Zhoghov Koumarelou Hadoug Ganonatrout'iwn" ("Special By-Laws for the Convening of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly"), Baikar, June 11, 1930.

Assembly.[1] At a special Diocesan Convention on September 14, 1930, at Saint Illuminator Church in New York, Vahan K'iwrk'-jian, Armenag Nazar, Maghak' Bērbērian, and Hayg Smsarian were elected delegates to represent the American Diocese at the National Assembly in Ēchmiadzin.

To the suprise of Armenians here and abroad, the Assembly was abrupty postponed with no future data determined. According to an article entitled, "Inch Gesē Khorhrtayin Hayasdan Ēchmiadzin Endrout'eants' Masin," this delay was ascribed to Soviet suspicion that, among the delegates at the Assembly, Tashnags might enter Armenia and influence the outcome of the election in their favor.[2] The main thrust of the article is that, according to Soviet interpretation, the Tashnag policies toward Ēchmiadzin were twofold: one favored transferral of the Holy See from Ēchmiadzin to the diaspora, with the Holy See to be used as a stronghold against the Communist government of Armenia; the other would keep Ēchmiadzin in its present location but elect a Pontiff who would oppose the Soviet regime in Armenia and expedite its overthrow.[1] Soviet hesitation to allow the election of a new Catholicos lasted until 1932.

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[1] Editorial, "Hayrabedagan Endrout'iwn" ("Pontifical Election"), Baikar, August 28, 1930.

[2] "Inch'Gesē Khorhrtayin Hayasdan Ēchmiadzni Endrout'-eants' Masin" ("What Khorhrtayin Hayasdan Reports About the Election in Ēchmiadzin"), Baikar, February 22, 1931; Adenakroutiwn Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovin ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), New York, January 31-February 1, 1931, p. 35.

Another issue arose in the 1930s over the defection to the West of a former Soviet Secret Service agent, Gregorii A. Agabekov, an Armenian national, who aroused much speculation in the political world.[2] He wrote a book, The Cheka at Work, in which he alleged that Soviet Secret Police, the OGPU, had infiltrated the high clerical ranks of the Armenian Church. The Tashnag Party welcomed such news and capitalized upon it. Its attack on the accused clerics and on the Holy See became more acrimonious as it labeled both the clergy and the adherents to Ēchmiadzin as Communist agents.[3] Actually, the clerics accused of loyalty to the Soviets and of being agents of the Soviets were known for their antagonistic feelings toward the Tashnag Party. One such churchman was shortly thereafter elected to the Primacy of the American Diocese. He was Archbishop Ghewont Tourian of Manchester, England.

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[1] The "Free Ecclesiastical Council", the new version of the "Free Church", urged Armenians not to elect as Catholicos any hierarch who held membership in the Supreme Spiritual Council. "Ēchmiadznay Shourch Khntirner" ("Issues Concerning Ēchmiadzin"), Baikar, June 21, 1931.

[2] Gregorii A. Agabekov, Die Tscheka Ander Arbeit (Stuttgart, 1932) quoted in Kolarz, Religion in the Soviet Union, p. 154; Editorial, "Aghapēgovi Aghmougin Shourch" ("About the Ado of Aghapēgov"), The Gotchnag, February 21, 1931, p. 229.

[3] "Aghapēgovi Aghmougin Shourch," The Gotchnag, February 21, 1931, p. 229; Kolarz, p. 154; Bardizian, pp. 87-90.

In view of this controversy, the American Diocese chose the road of loyalty and docility to the Holy See and supported her in her policy of maintaining a prudent and reserved attitude toward the Communist regime. An amount of $2000 was forwarded by the Diocese to Ēchmiadzin as an indication of goodwill to alleviate the economic difficulties of the Holy See.[1] Moreover, the parishes were urged to join efforts to help Ēchmiadzin, which needed special assistance in such trying times. However, the Tashnag elements in the Diocese were not disposed to lighten their political opposition to the Soviets in order to manifest their "filial obedience" to Ēchmiadzin. With the passage of time, conflicts and tensions were to mount amidst the feuding groups and further cast gloom on an already burdened Diocese. The division of the Armenian Church in America was foreshadowed in these controversies.

B. Period of Locum-Tenens I: Father Serovpē Nershabouh (1928-1930)

Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian submitted his resignation to the Central Executive Committee on August 15, 1928.[2] It was formally accepted by the Central Executive Committee on

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[1] Adanakrout'iwn, New York, January 31 - February 1, 1931, pp. 19, 20, 35.

[2] "Bashdōnagan" ("Official Notice"), Baikar, August 25, 1928.

August 21. Father Serovpē Nershabouh and Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian were asked to oversee the affairs of the Diocese for at least three hours daily. Although serious differences had led to tension between the former Primate and the Central Executive Committee, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian showed readiness to offer his services wherever needed.[1]

The period of Locum-Tenens for Father Nershabouh was short-termed and lasted only until his death on July 26, 1930. The leadership he provided was passive, devoid of personal initiative. It became obvious then that no major projects were intended by Diocesan authorities who simply assumed a day-to-day status quo policy.

1. Biographical Notes

Father Serovpē Nershabouh served the Diocese as Locum-Tenens from 1928 to 1930 while retaining the pastorate of St. Illuminator Church in New York. Nothing is known of his life and work prior to his coming to the United States from Constantinople, Turkey, in December, 1910.

The first reference to his name is found in the minutes of the Board of Church Trustees meetings of Holy Translators Church in Providence, Rhode Island. The Armenian community of Providence still had no church of its own. However, the Board of Church Trustees was greatly concerned with the religious needs of local Armenians and was in constant search for a clergyman. Meeting numerous difficulties in their search, the trustees requested a celibate pastor from the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople on May 23, 1910.[1] It was learned by letter on October 4, 1910, at a meeting of the Board of Church Trustees, that the Patriarchate had chosen Father Serovpē Nershabouh as pastor for Providence, and transportation fare for the new priest was requested.[2]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, January 31-February 1, 1931, p. 28.

From the minutes of the Board of Church Trustees meeting of January 3, 1911, it is learned that Father Nershabouh had already arrived in the United States by this date.[3] Much difficulty arose over determining the salary for the new pastor since the Providence parish had not yet a strong ecclesiastical body to oversee such administrative matters. After only fifteen weeks in office, Father Nershabouh was charged with "negligence and indifference toward his duties and religious services," thereby opening a rift between himself and the Board of Church Trustees.[4] He was further charged with absence from meetings and a desire to be reassigned to another parish. Because of these conflicts, the Church Trustees decided to withhold his weekly salary of ten dollars for the next seven weeks.[1]

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[1] "Atsanadedr Sourp T'arkmanch'ats' Egeghets'woy Hokapartsagan Zhoghovnerou" ("Minutes of the Board of Church Trustees"), Holy Translators Church, Providence, Rhode Island, May 23, 1910, pp. 195-196.

[2] *Ibid.*, September 13, 1910, p. 208; October 26, 1910, p. 212.

[3] *Ibid.*, January 3, 1911, p. 217. Archbishop Seropian gives December 29, 1910, as the date of Father Nershabouh's arrival. Moushegh Seropian, "Providēnsi Hay Kahgout'ĕ" ("The Armenian Colony of Providence"), *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ĕ*" 1912, p. 40.

[4] "Artsanadedr," Providence, Rhode Island, April 18, 1911, p. 237.

In a meeting on June 17, 1911, it was disclosed that Father Nershabouh had notified the Board of Church Trustees of his intentions to resign from the parish.[2] The Trustees declined his resignation in order to avoid further controversy among members of the community. A committee was designated to conduct formal discussions with the pastor in an attempt to bring about a reconciliation between the quarreling parties. The Trustees repeatedly insisted that Father Nershabouh should allot more time to his pastoral duties, but he remained unyielding. A group of church enthusiasts came to the assistance of Father Nershabouh and took issue with the Board of Church Trustees.[3] The Trustees reacted by declaring that these supporters of Father Nershabouh held no official membership in the local religious organization of the Armenian community, and they then charged both Father Nershabouh and his followers with receiving encouragement from the former Locum-Tenens, Father Bōghos Kaft'anian, and the Tashnag Party.[1]

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[1] Ibid., May 23, 1911, p. 239.

[2] Ibid., June 17, 1911, pp. 240-242.

[3] Ibid., September 7, 1911, pp. 244-245.

At a Membership Meeting in the early part of November, 1911, Father Nershabouh's attitude was strongly condemned by the membership, resulting in the termination of his pastorate.[2] The Church Trustees were instructed by the membership to seek a new pastor for the Providence community. For a short time a visiting priest served the parish. The Trustees appealed to the Diocese to instruct Father Nershabouh to cease his activities, which included administering and performing sacraments and rituals without the approval of local religious authorities. They also asked that he be ordered to leave Providence. As a final solution to the matter the Plenipotentiary Archbishop Kēork Iwt'iwjian, was asked to intercede.[3] However, available information does not indicate that any action was taken by the Archbishop against Father Nershabouh.

Further reference to Father Nershabouh after this incident is found only in the lists of names of clergy attending the Annual Diocesan Conventions, beginning with the year 1921.

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[1] *Ibid.*, September 7, 1911, pp. 244-245; September 26, 1911, pp. 245-246. Atamian, "Amerigahay Egeghets'in ou Egeghest'aganout'iwnĕ", *Amerigahay Darets'oytsĕ*, 1912, p. 123.

[2] "Artsanadedr," November 7, 23, 30, December 5, 20, 11, pp. 250-254.

[3] *Ibid.*, August 29, September 15, 1913, pp. 273-276; October 22, 1914, p. 320.

His name also appears with the delegates representing St. Illuminator Church in New York.[1]

In 1928, upon the resignation of the Primate, Father Nershabouh was designated Locum-Tenens. At this time he was serving as pastor of St. Illuminator Church in New York. He died on July 26, 1930, while on a visit to the parish of Richmond, Virginia.[2] Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian officiated at the funeral services held in St. Illuminator Church.[3] In contrast to earlier negative testimonies about Father Nershabouh, the eulogies offered at his funeral depicted the puritanical life he had led and stressed his thirty years of dedicated service to the Armenian Church.[4]

2. A Survey of Diocesan Life and Affairs

The Diocesan Convention which met in New York from October 7-8, 1928, officially received the resignation of the Primate, which had been submitted in August to the Central Executive Committee. The Convention affirmed the election of Father Nershabouh as Locum-Tenens. The Catholicos approved the appointment of Father Nershabouh as Locum-Tenens in February, 1929, and also instructed the Diocese to elect a new Primate.[1] Due to the economic depression which struck the United States in October 1929, and because of mounting partisan conflicts in the parishes, it was deemed prudent not to proceed as the Catholicos had instructed in electing a new Primate.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, Worcester, Mass., August 21, 1921, p.4.

[2] "Amerigayi Hayots Arhachnortagan Deghabah Dēr Serovpē Nershabouh Vakhjanadz" ("The Death of Father Serovpē Nershabouh, Locum-Tenens of Armenians of America"), Baikar, July 29, 1930.

[3] Entsag Kalch'enjian, "Odzoum Ew Houghargaworout'iwn Arhachnortagan Deghabah Vakhjaneal Dēr Serovpē Awak Kahanay Nershabouhi" ("Last Rites and Funeral Services of the Locum-Tenens Father Serovpē Neshabouh"), Baikar, August 6, 1930.

[3] Ibid.

Several parishes, including Chicago, Providence, Boston, Bridgeport, New Britain, and Union City, experienced internal problems and were torn by strife. They often showed little respect for Diocesan authority in cases where the latter attempted to intervene. The Boston and Union City parishes even went so far as to sever their ties with the Diocese.[2]

The parish in Providence, however, presented a more complicated problem. There, the all-too-familiar controversy between the pastor, Father Ghewont Martougēsian, and the Board of Church Trustees continued.[3] The pastor was accused of contempt in submitting his resignation to the Trustees whenever a difference of opinion and interests evolved. The dispute between them necessitated the mediation of the Central Executive Committee.

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[1] Ashjian, p. 36; "Arhachnortaranē Lourer" ("News from the Diocesan Office"), *Baikar*, June 1, 1929.

[2] *Adenakrout'iwn*, New York, January 31-February 1, 1931, pp. 24-25.

[3] Editorial, "Prawidēnsi Ts'awē̌" ("The Crisis of Providence"), *Baikar*, November 21, 1928; "Bashdōnagan" ("Official

On November 11, 1928, two members from the Central Executive Committee attended the Membership Meeting in Providence and urged reconciliation. As a result, the pastor remained in his service, only to be released from his pastorate at the end of several months.[1]

On April 29, 1929, the Central Executive Committee issued an appeal to solicit financial support for the Diocese.[2] The appeal stressed that Armenians in America until then had raised funds to aid fellow-Armenians in the homeland and diaspora. The time had now come to look after their own needs. Thus, the Diocese initiated Azkayin Dourk (a tithe) to be gathered from each community and parish of the Armenian Church.[3] By the end of the fiscal year 1930, a total of $2723 had been collected, much to the dismay of the Diocese, which had anticipated a larger sum.

In the latter part of 1929 Father Nershabouh announced that the Holy See had approved the new Constitution which was to be put into effect on January 1, 1930. Until then the Central Executive Committee had been comprised of two separate bodies, the Religious Council and the Economic Council, which were combined to form one organ known as the Central

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Notice"), Baikar, December 5, 1928.

[1] "Prawidēnsi Ts'awe", Baikar, November 21, 1928.

[2] "Goch' Amerigahayout'ean" ("An Appeal to the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, May 11, 1929, p. 597.

[3] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, January 31-February 1, 1931, pp. 33-34.

Executive Committee. The Religious Council ceased to function as a separate body, and its duties, mainly of a religious nature, were turned over to the Central Executive Committee.[1]

Despite widespread economic panic, the Armenian communities continued to manifest a degree of religious vitality. It was widely assumed that hard times would cause Armenians to reevaluate their religious commitments and carry through their church building programs. However, partisan contests and political extremists had further tragic surprises in store for the Church. Father Serovpē Nershabouh did not live long enough to see the impending crisis.

C. Period of Locum-Tenens II: Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian (1930-1931)

Upon the death of Father Serovpē Nershabouh on July 26, 1930, Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian, pastor of Holy Cross Church in New York, assumed the office of Locum-Tenens on August 30, 1930.[2] Father Sarkisian continued to serve the New York parish, in addition to his office as Locum-Tenens. His influence as a leader was more pronounced on the parish than on the Diocesan level. It was due largely to his work that the acquisition of the Holy Cross Church in New York was made, not a small accomplishment in the lifetime of this priest whose name is still remembered in that parish with great regard and affection.

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[1] Ibid., p. 22; Serovpē Nershabouh, "Basdhōnagan Haydararout'iwn" ("Official Notice"), Baikar, December 4, 1929.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, January 31-February 1, 1931, p. 21.

1. Biographical Notes

Born in Sewereg, Turkey, in 1867, to parents of modest means, Father Sarkisian received his formal schooling in the Seminary of the Armenian Monastery in Jerusalem.[1] Before he entered the priesthood, he was an educator in Armenian institutions in Turkey and Egypt. He was ordained in 1893 by Archbishop Krikoris Hovhannēsian and was appointed pastor of Armenians in Eōdēmish in Smyrna, Turkey.

After sharing the tragic fate of his parishioners in Smyrna at the hands of the Turks, he emigrated in 1922 to America. Before assuming the pastorship of the Holy Cross Church, Father Sarkisian served for a brief time in the parish of St. Illuminator Church in New York City. He was called to the pastorate of the Holy Cross Church in January 1929.

Father Sarkisian was reputedly a gentle, humble, and pleasant man to all.[2] Many stories are told of him, among which one describes that he never attended any Trustee meeting without first turning over to the Board all the donations he had collected from his parishioners for the Church fund. Father Sarkisian served his parish for less than two years. However, because of his compassionate nature he won the undying affection of his parishioners. He remained in office as Locum-Tenens until December, 1931, when he became ill. He died on February 20, 1932, with Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian officiating at the funeral services. The routine work of the Diocese was then carried on under the supervision of the Central Executive Committee.

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[1] For biographical data concerning Father Sarkisian consult Tenth Anniversary, Holy Cross Church, New York, 1929-39, p. 20; Souvenir Booklet, Holy Cross Church, New York, March 18, 1945, pp. 9-10.

[2] M. T'ōpalian, "Houghargaworout'iwn Dēr Harout'iwn Hōr" ("Funeral Service for Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian"), Zouartnotz, April 1, 1932, p. 8.

2. Ineffectual Times for the Diocese

In the latter part of September, 1930, Bishop Karekin Khach'adourian, Primate of the Western Diocese, stopped in New York on his way to Armenia.[1] He was on his way to attend the National Ecclesiastical Assembly in Ēchmiadzin to elect a new Pontiff. However, this Assembly never took place. In New York, Bishop Khach'adourian was asked by the Central Executive Committee, with the consent of Father Sarkisian, to make visitations to various Armenian communities. He agreed and his itinerary included parishes in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, where he had the opportunity to meet with the faithful and officiate at religious services.[2]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, January 31-February 1, 1931, p. 28.

[2] Ibid.

The Diocesan Convention was convened on January 31 and February 1, 1931, in St. Illuminator Church in New York. Since Father Sarkisian could not preside over the Convention because of ill health, Father Nshan P'ap'azian, pastor of St. Peter's Church of Troy, New York, was asked to preside over the sessions of the Convention. The election of a new Primate dominated the agenda. The absence of a Primate had caused a state of uncertainty and a feeling of ineffectiveness among the Diocesan Churches and Armenians in general.[1]

Various reasons were offered in favor of and against the election of a Primate. One major concern of the Central Executive Committee was the lack of financial means to be allocated as salary for the Primate. Their suggestion was the merger of the two North American Dioceses under the spiritual leadership of one Primate. Moreover, a similar desire was expressed by the Californians, with the understanding that each Diocese would preserve its independent administration and existence under the aegis of Bishop Karekin Khach'adourian, the incumbent of the Western Diocese.[2] This motion received very little support. Instead, the delegates considered two other motions. One argued to postpone the election for an indefinite time, the other insisted upon an immediate election. The latter motion received majority support. Archbishop Ghewont Tourian of Manchester, England, was chosen as the new Primate. On March 12, 1931, the Supreme Spiritual Council confirmed his election and accordingly notified the Diocese.[1] It was believed that, with the election of the new Primate, ineffectual times for the Church would be alleviated and a new period of Church leadership would be ushered in.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovin ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), New York, October 10-11, 1931, p. 20.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, January 31-February 1, 1931, pp. 37-38,

D. Expansion of Churches

In the late twenties and early thirties, as has been noted, the Armenian Church acquired four churches. Throughout this transitional period religious life was somewhat superficial and limited to Sunday morning services, performance of rituals, and ceremonies related to major Church feasts. No Armenian Church was reported to have been forced to close her doors because of financial difficulties. However, like many other denominations, the Armenian Church felt the blow of the economic depression of the 1930s. Budgets were slashed and expenses were drastically curtailed.

One of the new churches, St. Gregory Illuminator Church, was built in St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada, in 1930; the three remaining churches were located in the state of New York. These were the Holy Trinity Church, built in Brooklyn in 1929; Holy Cross Church in Uptown New York in 1929; and St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Binghamton in 1930.[1] Transferral of Diocesan headquarters, too, may have given impetus to church building zeal in New York. Economically, the Depression had taken a less heavy toll in the Armenian communities located in New York State.

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[1] Ibid., p. 10; Khorēn Mouradpēgian, "Amerigahayots' Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Adenabedout'ean" ("To the Executive of the National Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, April 25, 1931, p. 536.

Finally, the acquisition of four new churches was not necessarily a sign that a people was turning out of despair to God in a spectacular way. By and large, they did not. It was simply an illustration of strong religious interest on the part of a community which was in search of its religio-ethnic identity. The more churches Armenians came to possess, the greater became the field of battle for the Armenian factions who would not cease their fighting. In the not-too-distant future, the controversies would result in the division of the Armenian Church in America in 1933.

1. Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, New York

Approximately 3000 Armenians lived in Brooklyn when the church was purchased on May 23, 1929.[2] The issue of owning a church was raised at a meeting in 1926, at which some three hundred parishioners congregated to discuss matters pertaining to the local Armenian schools.

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[1] The Holy Cross Church in Uptown New York will not be treated in this chapter, but in Chapter XI, because that edifice was consecrated in 1937.

[2] Very little information of this parish is found in Adenakrout'iwn, October 10-11, 1931, p. 49; Ardashēs Bōghosian, "Brouk'lini Nor Knouadz Egeghets'in" ("The Newly Purchased Church of Brooklyn"), Baikar, June 28, 1929.

Primate Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian designated a nine-member Church Building Committee. On May 23, 1929, the Committee purchased a former Norwegian Church at a cost of $47,000 and with a seating capacity of three hundred persons. It was located on the corner of 4th Avenue and 15th Street in Brooklyn. Dikran Bedrosian was instrumental in the acquisition of the Church. After the Church underwent renovation, it was consecrated. No details are available concerning the dedication and consecration services and its further use by the local Armenians. It is probable that, because of the Depression, the church was forced to be liquidated by Armenians who were unable to meet the payments on the mortage in the amount of $20,250.[1] According to information provided by Father Ashjian, the church in Brooklyn went out of existence in the months following the assassination of Archbishop Tourian, on December 24, 1933.[2] A probable reason may be that the Armenian community was internally divided and the parties concerned may have agreed upon the sale of the church.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, October 10-11, 1931, p. 49.

[2] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, p. 161.

2. Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church, Binghamton, New York

In 1912 initial attempts were made in Binghamton to organize the Armenian community. One can find many natives of Hajen, Sebastia, and Harpoot, from the homeland, among Binghamton's immigrants. These uprooted Armenians were employed mainly in shoe factories and cleaning businesses. A large number of immigrants in time improved themselves economically.

The first Board of Trustees was formed in 1923. In 1924 the Ladies' Auxiliary was organized, which became the leading force in the acquisition of a church in 1928 where Armenians had usually held their religious services. The church, with a seating capacity of 250, was purchased for $6,300. On April 6, 1930, the church was consecrated as St. Gregory the Illuminator by the former Primate, Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian, with V. Aslanian serving as Godfather. The first pastor was a recent immigrant priest, Harout'iwn Toumayian, who held his post for eight months. It is unfortunate that this parish church for many years did not have permanent pastors but only transient clergy.

3. St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada

By the turn of the twentieth century, several hundred Armenians had already settled in Ontario, Canada. Armenians who fled from the Turkish massacres to Canada chose to live in St. Catherines, Hamilton, Brantford, Toronto, Georgetown, and Montreal.[1] According to a census compiled in 1927 by Father Movsēs Dēr Step'anian, the visiting pastor-at-large of Armenians in Canada, approximately 307 families, or 1261 Armenians, lived in Canada.[2]

Like Armenians in the United States, these immigrants fled from political upheavals in the homeland. They preferred to settle chiefly in urban regions, where they found employment in factories. For a long while, the religious needs of the Armenians of Canada were poorly attended to. In 1918, a nominal Board of Church Trustees was founded in St. Catherines. In 1925, through the efforts of Lewon Babaian, a Toronto Oriental rug merchant and a well known community leader, the Armenian Union of Canada was founded. It was hoped that this union would serve as a bond between Armenians who had been residents of Canada for some time and the newcomers, assisting them in orienting themselves to civic and social responsibilities.[3]

On November 30, 1930, a church located on Carlton Street was consecrated by the former Primate, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, who named it St. Gregory the Illuminator Church.

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[1] Ashjian, pp. 228-233; Adenakrout'iwn, Boston, May 15-16, 1927, pp. 31-38; "Kanadayi Arhachin Hay Arhak'elagan Egeghets'woy Odzoumě" ("The Consecration of the First Armenian Church of Canada"), Baikar, December 25, 1930.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, Boston, Mass., May 15-16, 1927, pp.37-38.

[3] Ibid., p. 34.

The consecration was a milestone for the Armenians of Canada. It was the first church edifice of the Armenian faith on Canadian soil. The purchase was made possible through the generosity of Lewon Babaian, who also served as the Godfather of the Church. Father Dēr Step'anian became the parish priest. Because of economic reasons, in subsequent years, the parishes of St. Catherines and Hamilton, Canada, and the parish in Niagara Falls in America, were supervised by the same pastor who usually made his residence in Niagara Falls.

E. Summary and Conclusion

The short period from 1928 to 1930 can best be described as a lull or a prelude to the violent phase of Armenian Church history which began in the early thirties. The main characteristics of this period consisted of a leadership vacuum created by the resignation of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian and the intensification of the struggle between the political parties, a development which was deepening the cleavage in the Armenian Church and society.

The two Locum-Tenens who carried the burdens of leadership were not equal to the task that lay ahead--the pacification of a troubled community. They neither had the rank nor the youthful energy to deal with the deteriorating situation. Even if these two "good shepherds" possessed the requisite attributes of leadership, still they might have failed.

It seems that, having barely escaped from the atrocities in Turkey and repressions in Russia, the Armenians were now marching headlong toward a predetermined path leading to self-destruction as a community. It is to these tragic happenings that we shall turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X

DIVISION IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

(1931-1933)

Following the resignation of Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian in 1928 the Diocese remained for some time without a Primate and suffered as a consequence. What she needed was an inspiring leader who would contribute to the religious and administrative growth of the Diocese. Such a person was found in Bishop Ghewont Tourian of Manchester, England, who was elected Primate in 1931. After assuming office he not only undertook the task of providing an efficient administrative structure for the Diocese, but he also labored to further the cause of the Church by establishing church organizations and Armenian schools.

It was unfortunate that his primacy was short-lived and punctuated by a series of serious incidents, culminating in his assassination on December 24, 1933. These incidents arose over the observance of Armenian Memorial Day on April 24, the display of the Armenian Tricolor, and the assault on the Archbishop at a church picnic in Westboro, Massachusetts. All these contributed to bringing about a split in the Church at the Annual Diocesan Convention on September 3, 1933. The Tashnag Party opposed the policies of the Primate, while the Rhamagavar Party rallied to his support. Because of the killing, Armenian communities were torn assunder and the spectre of schism cast its shadow upon the Church.

The killers of the Primate were allegedly Tashnag Party members. Because of this the Tashnags lost favor with Armenians the world over. Although they categorically denied any direct involvement in the tragedy, their protestations were believed neither by the public nor Ēchmiadzin. A handful of clergymen and Tashnag sympathizers subsequently formed their own dissident Diocesan Executive Committee and opposed the lawful Diocesan authority which had the sanction of Ēchmiadzin. This marked the beginning of the division of the Armenian Church in America.

A. Relative Soviet Tolerance Toward Ēchmiadzin

Two and one-half years after the death of Catholicos Kēork V, in 1930, Soviet authorities finally allowed the National Ecclesiastical Assembly to convene on November 10-13, 1932, in order to elect a new Catholicos.[1] Permission to hold such an election was a concession to the Armenians by the Soviets, particularly since the Russian Orthodox Church was being deprived of freedom in normalizing her inner administrative structure. It has been suggested that the purpose of the Communists was to maintain their control over

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[1] "Hayrabedagan Ĕndrout'ean Shourch" ("About the Catholicossal Election"), The Gotchnag, August 27, 1932, p.877.

Ēchmiadzin.[1] The Tashnag Party interpreted this action by the Soviets as a means of gaining the sympathy of the Armenians of the diaspora, as a way of using Ēchmiadzin to convert the Armenian Dioceses of the diaspora into bases of Communist infiltration and activity, and as a means of reaching the multitude of Armenian immigrants with their propaganda.[2]

The non-Tashnags, however, interpreted the Soviet move as a relaxation of stringent rules and were pleased that the See would no longer be vacant. On November 12, 1932, the Primate of Erevan, Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian, was elected Catholicos of All-Armenians by a majority vote at the National Ecclesiastical Assembly.[3] The Eastern Diocese was represented by two delegates, Bishop Kovsēp' Garabedian of the Holy Cross Church in New York and by Dikran Smsarian of Union City, New Jersey. Three other delegates from America could not attend the Assembly for personal reasons.[4] The people of Armenia and the diaspora alike greeted the news of the election enthusiastically. On November 12th thousands flocked to the Holy See to witness the enthronement of the new Catholicos.

The relative tolerance manifested by the Soviets in the earlier years of Catholicos Khorēn's incumbency gave way to

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[1] Kolarz, pp. 155-156.

[2] Bardizian, pp. 128-129.

[3] "Khorēn Ark'ebisgobos Ěndrouadz Gat'oghigos" ("Archbishop Khorēn Elected as Catholicos"), *The Gotchnag*, November 19, 1932, p. 1178.

[4] *Adenakrout'iwn*, New York, January 21-22, 1933, p. 17.

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more stringent policies in the late 1930s. In view of Soviet policies, the Tashnag element held strongly to the conviction that the Holy See was dominated by the Communists and that the Catholicos was simply a captive within the confines of his residence at Ēchmiadzin. On the other hand, the non-Tashnag segment disapproved of this interpretation and continued to regard Ēchmiadzin as the religious center free from Soviet interference. The newly elected Catholicos was considered a shrewd diplomat, and it was hoped he would be able to persuade the Soviets into making concessions for the re-opening of a number of churches throughout Armenia and for the return of confiscated properties.[1]

The Tashnags charged the Diocese with excessive loyalty and blind obedience to Ēchmiadzin and alleged that she was subject to Communist influence. Archbishop Tourian became the target for Tashnag attack and was charged with being a Communist agent.[2] As these rumors and accusations increased, the faithful of the Diocese and anti-Tashnag political groups displayed even stronger loyalty to the Diocese and the Primate. Once again, political polemics became a religious issue to be dealt with emotionally.

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[1] Dickran H. Boyajian, The Pillars of the Armenian Church (Watertown: Baikar Press, 1962), p. 398; Kolarz, pp. 154-155.

[2] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 360.

B. The New Primate: Archbishop Ghewont Tourian (1931-1933)

The religious and administrative policies of Archbishop Ghewont Tourian were centered on three major areas. These included the betterment of the spiritual state of the people through the Church, increasing the awareness of ethnic identity of the youth through Armenian schools, and the reorganization of the Diocese through the strengthening of Diocesan headquarters.[1] However, his driving ambition for unification, organization, and promotion of the Armenian faith among the faithful was soon to experience difficulty. The Tashnag Party attacked not only the essence of his religious policy but also his methods of implementation. The Archbishop often attempted to persuade and compromise with the Tashnag Party, but he was never able to reconcile them to his policies. Because the Rhamgavar Party lent its support to the Primate, the Tashnag Party adopted an even more aggressive stand. It appeared that neither party was willing to forget its factional differences for the sake of unity.

Thus began the division in the Armenian Church which has persisted for the last forty years in America.

The man who was to become the central character of the darkest page of the history of the Armenian Church in America was born on July 1, 1881, in Scutari, Constantinople, Turkey, of humble parentage. Ghewont Tourian was seventeen years of age when he entered the Seminary of Armash in 1898. He studied under the Armenian Patriarch, Archbishop Maghak'ia Ōrmanian (1841-1918) of Constantinople, Turkey, and Archbishop Eghishē Tourian (1861-1930), two eminent churchmen of great scholarship and administrative ability. He was ordained a celibate priest in 1901 by Archbishop Eghishē Tourian, to whom he was related.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1931, p. 11.

During the Patriarchate of Archbishop Ōrmanian (1896-1908), the young clergyman served as personal secretary to the Patriarch until 1908. Prior to his elevation to the rank of bishop in 1913, Tourian served as Vicar-General under four Armenian Patriarchs of Constantinople. At the same time he was also the preacher at the Holy King Church in Kadekeuy, a suburb of Istanbul, Turkey. During the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 he was in charge of the Diocese of Adrianapole, Turkey. From there he was sent to Smyrna as Primate, where he remained until 1922. As a result of the Turkish Greek War, going on since 1919, Smyrna was recaptured by the Turks on September 13-14, 1922.[1] A three-day Smyrna fire, from September 13 to 15, destroyed nearly a square mile in the Greek and Armenian sectors, leaving nearly 200,000 people homeless.[1] After fleeing Smyrna, Tourian took refuge in Athens, Greece, from which he departed for Manchester, England, there to become the spiritual leader of the Armenian community. He remained in Manchester until his election to the Primacy of the Armenian Church in America in 1931.

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[1] William L. Langer, ed., "Asia," *An Encyclopedia of World History*, (1952), p. 1095.

A reform-minded churchman, Archbishop Tourian combined energetic administrative abilities and scholarly interests. Among the Armenian-language treatises authored by him are *The Sacrament of Baptism*, *The Origin and Authenticity of the Four Gospels*, *The Simple Sermons* (in five volumes), and *Seminary Sermons*. Two of his works, *The Seven Sacraments of the Armenian Church*, and *The Handbook of Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church*, have been published in English. The Archbishop distinguished himself as a forceful and eloquent preacher.

The Archbishop stood stoutly for the authority of the Holy See and the interests of the Pontiff against the attacks and political intrigues of the Tashnag Party. There is much room for controversy about his handling of Armenian political polemics. Some are of the opinion that he was poorly informed of the political background of the affairs of Ēchmiadzin and of the alleged infiltration of Communism into the Armenian Church.[1] His actions stirred up Tashnag enmity and bitterness. They set off a chain reaction that caused him to suffer many injustices before his eventful life was cut short by the dagger of an assassin on December 24, 1933, during a processional service in the Holy Cross Church in New York. The disintegrating effects of political intrigues, simmering for thirty years in America, exploded in the division of the Armenian Church.

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[1] *Ibid.*; Marjorie Housepian, *The Smyrna Affair* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971) provides a fuller background of this event. She bases her account of the events and attitudes of this tragedy, on official government documents, contemporary periodicals, and on eye-witness testimony.

Archbishop Tourian was a man of tall stature and impressive carriage, with refined manners and a resonant voice.[2] He had harmonized within himself the qualities of intellectual attainment and practical ability, driving energy, and a pleasing personality. He demanded excellence in others as well as in himself.

Archbishop Tourian arrived in New York harbor on May 28, 1931, and he was greeted enthusiastically by many. A motorcade escorted him to Saint Illuminator Church on 27th Street, where a solemn traditional procession took place. The assembled received the first benediction of their Primate. In the evening a dinner, attended by both church and diocesan

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[1] Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church (Boston: Hairenik Press, 1958), pp. 46-47.

[2] Leon Tourian, Badmout'ean Hamar ("For Historical Use"), Vol. I (New York: Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, 1934), p. 6.

officials, was given in honor of Archbishop Tourian.[1] On June 5, an official banquet was tendered in honor of the new Primate in the Lettham Hotel in New York. People of many political affiliations attended this banquet. During the program remarks delivered by the Chairman of the Central Council, Khosrov Babayian, were not well received by certain segments of the people who thought them to be indicative of Tashnag attitudes toward the Primate. Babayian cautioned the Archbishop to be wary of the enthusiastic response he now received from the people.

> Don't be deceived by this outpouring of affection, Dear Bishop. When the time comes this same group of people knows how to banish their Primate during the thick of the night.[2]

To this the Primate replied in the following words:

> If the people support me, I shall not flee and shall remain at my post. However, if my people desert me, then I shall willingly depart without waiting for night to fall.[3]

To politically oriented individuals these remarks made by Babayian seemed to signal future occurrences staged by the Tashnag Party against the Primate. But for the unsuspecting public they were simply often-heard remarks recited upon such occasions.

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[1] "Kerashnorh Dēr Ghewont Ebisgobos Tourian" ("His Grace, Bishop Ghewont Tourian"), The Gotchnag, June 13, 1931, p. 759.

[2] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Badmout'ean Hamar, Vol. II: Haladzanke Tourian Srpazani Tēm ("Against Archbishop Tourian") (New York: Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, 1934), pp. 8-9.

[3] Ibid., p. 9.

C. Initial Steps Toward Diocesan Reorganization

After assuming office on June 1, 1933, Archbishop Tourian undertook immediate measures to have the Diocese operate in a more effective way. Administratively, he wished to make the Diocese a microcosm of the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople.[1] He formed a Religious Council to be responsible for matters of religion alone, an Educational Council to provide curriculum materials to teach the Armenian language to the young, and a Financial Council to be concerned with securing financial resources for the Diocese. The Primate was also responsible for issuing regulations for the Ladies Auxiliary and Choirs and directives delineating the roles of pastors and trustees.

Within a few months after his arrival, he had already visited fifteen parishes, extending from New York through Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. He began his visits on June 7 and continued them through September 27, just prior to the Diocesan Convention. His visits were generally well received by the populace. During his visitations, he met with representatives of church organizations and held discussions pertaining to local and national problems of the Armenian Church.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Arhachnortarani" ("Official Notice of the National Diocese"), *The Gotchnag*, April 16, 1932, pp. 433-434.

From October 10 to 11, 1931, Archbishop Tourian presided over the first Diocesan Convention of his primacy, held in St. Illuminator Church.[1] At the opening of the Convention the new Primate recited his oath of office in the Church. This ceremony was followed by the presentation of the Primate's report. Archbishop Tourian related to the Convention his impressions of the parishes, pastors, Boards of Church Trustees, and churches in general which he had visited, and he commended them for their dedicated work. He requested that the trustees maintain closer ties with the Primate. He strongly urged that the Churches and Armenian schools work very closely together, as any separation of these two institutions would prove detrimental to the Armenian communities in America.

Within his first year of office Archbishop Tourian consecrated St. John the Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, and Holy Ascension Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Construction was started on St. James Church in Watertown, Massachusetts, and Holy Cross Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts. In general, the Armenian communities showed a genuine interest toward the Church as evidenced by the rise in church attendance. However, this reorientation of Diocesan life was to be impaired shortly by partisan interests.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1931, p. 10.

D. Prelude to Division: Stages in a Drama

The initial months of Archbishop Tourian's incumbency were marked by extensive efforts toward reconciliation within the Armenian Community. The Archbishop was determined to create harmony among feuding parties and to maintain an open dialogue with the leaders of rival factions. During one of his visitations to the Greater Boston community, he paid an official visit to the headquarters of the two rival groups located at the Baikar and Hairenik press buildings.

As a rule the Rhamgavar Party supported the policies of the Primate, whereas the Tashnag Party opposed them. Despite the attitude of the Tashnag Party, the Primate still desired their cooperation and presence within the Diocese. He even celebrated Divine Liturgy in a Tashnag-sponsored club as a conciliatory move.[1] However, no efforts on his part deterred the Tashnag Party from launching fierce attacks against him.

As Tashnag opposition increased, the supporters of Archbishop Tourian were offended. They, in turn, intensified their counterattack. To complicate matters further, the Tashnag Party charged Archbishop Tourian with being an OGPU agent sent to America to wreck the foundation of the Armenian Church and community.[2] It also indiscriminately accused the

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Haladzanke Tourian Srpazani Tēm, p. 10.

[2] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 362; Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, pp. 45-46.

Primate of being an imposter and a fraud. The Tashnag Party claimed the role of "Defender of the Faith" and stated its ultimate aim as the "freeing of the Armenian Church from the influence of the Soviet government".[1]

The Primacy of Archbishop Tourian was punctuated by a series of serious incidents which the Tashnag Party increasingly interpreted as reflective of his pro-Soviet sentiments. Major controversies revolved around the ban imposed by the Primate upon the clergy not to attend Armenian Memorial Day observances held outside the Church (April 24); refusal of the Primate to speak at the Century of Progress Exposition held on July 1, 1933, in Chicago until removal of the Armenian Tri-color; assault by seven Tashnag members upon the Archbishop at a church picnic in Westboro, Massachusetts, one month later; and disruption of the Diocesan Convention on September 3, 1933 in New York by the rump convention staged by a Tashnag-oriented dissident group.

Archbishop Tourian's feelings about Soviet Armenia were no secret. Into the last section of the Divine Litury, "The Blessing and the Dismissal," in which the priest recites aloud "The Prayer Amid the Church," Archbishop Tourian had inserted the words "Soviet Armenian Republic."[1] The Tashnag faction objected only to the insertion of the word "Soviet."[2]

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[1] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 362.

1. Armenian Memorial Day Controversy

On April 24, 1932, Armenian Memorial Day was observed at Adams Memorial Hall in New York. The observance of Armenian Memorial Day provided the Tashnag Party with their first opportunity to launch fierce attacks upon Archbishop Tourian. They criticised him for allowing these observances to be conducted only in churches and for his restrictions upon the clergy from attending programs outside the Church.

The observance was sponsored by a local Armenian non-partisan society called the "Friends of Martyred Writers." The Primate was asked to preside at this gathering, but he declined, stating that a previous commitment obliged him to be in Canada on that particular day.[3] The Committee then invited the former Primate, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, to preside at the Memorial Day observance, to which he consented.

Archbishop Tourian had issued a special directive concerning the observance of Armenian Memorial Day on April 24,

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[1] Leon Tourian, *The Handbook of Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church*, (n.d.), p. 80. The above insertion appears in the Armenian section of the book, but is deleted in the English version, p. 81.

[2] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Haladzankĕ Tourian Srpazani Tēm*, p. 13.

[3] "Abrilean Skadōnĕ Niweork'i Mēch" ("The Observance of April Memorial Day in New York"), *Hairenik*, April 29, 1932.

1932. He instructed the clergy to organize programs for this occasion, but these were to be conducted only in the Church. He further forbade the clergy from presiding over or attending any observances held outside the Church. His reason for this was due to the fact that the Tashnag Party had turned these Memorial Day observances into mass meetings by which to promote their anti-Soviet and anti-Turkish propaganda.[1] Archbishop Tourian based his motives upon a Catholicosal encyclical decreed on June 26, 1929 by Kēork V, strongly urging Armenian clergy not to become involved in anti-Soviet propaganda.[2]

While in Canada, Archbishop Tourian was informed that Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian would preside at the Memorial Day observance. Consequently, Archbishop Tourian sent a telegram to Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian in New York, dated April 23, 1932. It read, "According to latest Prelacy order, no clergy is allowed to preside at or participate in any skahantēs (Memorial Day Observance) outside the Church."[3] As a result, Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian attended but did not preside at the observance. He announced to those gathered in the hall that a telegram received from Archbishop Tourian prohibited him from presiding at this observance, and as an obedient clergyman, he was obliged to heed the order.[1]

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Haladzankě Tourian Srpazani Tēm, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., p. 20.

[3] Ibid., p. 16.

This incident created apprehension among Tashnag followers and marked the beginnings of their anti-Primate activities. An editorial in the *Hairenik* related that, since the arrival of the Archbishop in this country, the Tashnag Party had pursued a policy of neutrality toward him.[2] The editorial further said that the Tashnag Party could no longer remain indifferent in view of the Primate's "un-Armenian" activities and charged Archbishop Tourian with maintaining amiable relations with the Communists.

> It is no longer any secret that the Primate of the Armenians of America is a staunch friend of the Bolsheviks. ... Archbishop Tourian serves the Bolsheviks with fanatic admiration. Apparently as the agent of the Bolsheviks, he conducts himself in such a manner as to remain pleasing to them.[3]

To supporters of the Primate, these allegations of the *Hairenik* were outrageous and untrue. The community flew into a rage.[4] Amidst all the turmoil, moderate voices questioned the policies of both the Primate and the Tashnag Party. But these voices went unheeded. From all appearances, partisan fanaticism was on the increase as still another incident contributed to the escalation of tension between the Archbishop and his adversaries.

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[1] "Abrilean Skadōně Niweork'i Mēch," *Hairenik*, April 29, 1932.

[2] "Amerigahayout'ean Nedouadz Tserhnotsě" ("The Glove Thrown to the Armenians of America"), *Hairenik*, April 30, 1932.

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Haladzankě Tourian Srpazani Tēm*, pp. 22-23.

2. The "Smyrna Affair" Dispute

Hostility toward the Primate was rekindled by an article entitled, "The Not-Too-Distant Past of Archbishop Ghewont Tourian," appearing in the Hairenik under the pseudonym of Izmirts'i.[1] The article gave an account of the debacle that Smyrna underwent in 1922 with the arrival of the Turkish Army and the fire which encompassed the city. It described the plight and exodus of the people who were left unattended by their spiritual leader, Archbishop Tourian, Primate of the Armenians of Smyrna, who had fled the city earlier. The article charged him with cowardice, negligence, and desertion in the very hour when heroism should have been displayed. The article further maintained that seven days before the holocaust, Archbishop Tourian and other religious heads had been briefed by the Greek mayor of Smyrna to deliver their people into safety. However, Archbishop Tourian had done nothing; instead he had fled the city.

The appearance of this article plagued the political parties and Armenian communities in the days to come. The already tense atmosphere became more volatile as tempers flared and writers sought to discredit the Archbishop for his conduct during the Smyrna Affair. Five days after publication of the article, Archbishop Tourian replied to his critic "so that history may be written as it was then."[1]

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[1] Izmirts'i (pseud.), "Ghewont Ebisgobos Touriani Modawor Ants'ealě" ("The Not-Too-Distant Past of Archbishop Tourian"), Hairenik, July 2, 1932.

A brief historical background is appropriate at this point to shed light upon this controversy.[2] The Greeks landed in Smyrna on May 14, 1919, with the approval of the Allies. As Primate of the Armenian community, Archbishop Tourian cautioned his flock not to be overjubilant, thereby antagonizing the defeated Turkish populace. As the days passed, it became apparent that the Turks were the victors rather than the Greeks. On March 26, 1922, the Allied Powers attempted a settlement of the Greek-Turkish conflict. No armistice was to be granted by the Turks until the Greeks had evacuated Anatolia. On July 29, as an ultimatum to Greece, the Allied Powers forbade the occupation of Constantinople. August 18, 1922, marked the Turkish counter-offensive against the Greeks. As city after city fell to the Turks, the Greek armies fled in confusion to the coast.

Prior to the Turkish conquest of Smyrna on September 9-11, 1922, an Armenian General by the name of Torkom organized a volunteer army in Smyrna to assist the Greeks. General Torkom and his military aides requested from the Armenian

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[1] Tourian, Badmout'ean Hamar, p. 10.

[2] Langer, An Encyclopedia of World History, pp. 1094-1095; Housepian, pp. 198-211; Tourian, Badmout'ean Hamar, pp. 5-23.

Diocese in Smyrna that Archbishop Tourian lend his undivided support for this cause. However, Archbishop Tourian denied any assistance, considering this request too daring and with possible unfortunate repercussions. General Torkom's activities had become known to Turkish officials and the populace in general. The French Consul in Smyrna advised the Archbishop to remain neutral in the bitter conflict between the Turks and the Greeks. General Torkom and his men besieged the Diocese and threatened the Archbishop. Archbishop Tourian appealed to the Greek High Commissioner of Smyrna to intervene. As a result, the High Commissioner demanded that General Torkom leave the city immediately.

As the Turkish Army marched toward Smyrna, Christians took refuge in their churches. On September 3, 1922, the Greek Metropolitan Chrysostom and Archbishop Tourian visited the Greek High Commissioner to obtain the latest information on the political and military situation. The Greek Metropolitan insisted upon seeking aid from the Allies to resist the advancing Turks, while the Armenian Prelate suggested marine escort to a haven provided by the Allies. The High Commissioner advised them to do whatever was necessary even without his sanction. Upon his return to the Diocese, Archbishop Tourian convened a meeting with the leaders of the Armenian community. His suggestion to depart from the city met with the disapproval of the people who favored the position of the Greek Metropolitan. In the next few days it became apparent that the city would soon be occupied by the Turks. Of all the political and religious leaders who had exhorted the people to remain in the city, only the Greek Metropolitan and Archbishop Tourian remained as the religious leaders.

On September 9, 1922, the Turkish cavalrymen entered the city. Smyrna was captured by the soldiers of General Neureddin, an officer notorious for his contempt of foreigners. Turkish soldiers surrounded the Armenian quarters, where looting, robbery, and killing ran free. From September 13 to 15 a three-day fire destroyed nearly a square mile in both the Greek and Armenian sectors of the city and left 200,000 people homeless. General Neureddin ordered the Turkish mob to treat the Greek Metropolitan harshly. Subsequently, he was brutally murdered. Marjorie Housepian writes in her book The Smyrna Affair that "they tore out the Patriarch's beard, gouged out his eyes with knives, cut off his ears, his nose, and his hands."[1]

Armenians also fell victims to the Turkish holocaust. The Turks systematically flushed out the Armenians from their quarters in the city. Assisted by Turkish civilians, the Turkish regulars moved from house to house attacking their victims. Marjorie Housepian offers the following grim picture of the terror-stricken Armenians.

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[1] Housepian, The Smyrna Affair, p. 119.

> Women and girls were raped, knived, or pursued into the streets, where they fell prey to other gangs. ... Men were either murdered in their homes or lashed together at the wrists and led away to be killed at the edge of the city.[1]

Archbishop Tourian sought refuge at the home of Pierre Sislian, an Armenian Catholic community leader. However, he was asked to leave two days later because of a proclamation by Turkish authorities who threatened with a court-martial anyone caught concealing an Armenian. Through the efforts of Sislian, Archbishop Tourian took shelter at Saint Choeur Catholic Monastery. With the aid of the Superior of the Monastery, he escaped onto a French battleship. Other unfortunate Armenians lay on barges along the breakwater. Small boats overloaded with human cargo moved from ship to ship, their passengers begging to be taken aboard.

Overall reaction to the Hairenik article was one of dismay. It was considered a poor attempt by the Tashnag Party to discredit Archbishop Tourian for political events for which he could hardly be held responsible. In concluding his article, Archbishop Tourian stated that if the need ever arose to seek those men responsible for the massacres against the Armenians, it would be unnecessary to look for them within the ranks of the clergy. The Gotchnag commented on this in the following manner: "If the need arises to find such men, Archbishop Tourian is the last person to be considered."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

3. The Challenge to the Authority of the Primate

While one segment of the Armenian community made no effort to hide its disenchantment with Bishop Tourian, Ēchmiadzin, on the other hand, expressed gratitude and appreciation for the dedication and work of the Bishop. By a special encyclical, the Catholicos elevated Bishop Ghewont to the rank of Archbishop in 1932.[2]

The year 1932 marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese. Anniversary celebrations were observed by Armenian churches throughout the country by way of special church services and functions.[3] On this occasion a banquet was sponsored by the Diocese at the Bosphorous Restaurant in New York and was attended by Armenians of all political and religious leanings. The speakers emphasized the role of the Church and the responsibility of the people toward their mother institution.

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[1] Editorial, "Bayk'arē̆ Arhachnortin Tēm" ("Crusade Against the Primate"), The Gotchnag, October 8, 1932.

[2] Ē̆ntsag Kazanjian, "Arhachnortarani Tiwanēn Gē̆ Haghortoui" ("News Release from the Diocese"), The Gotchnag, December 10, 1932, p. 1248.

[3] "Shkegh Jashgeroyt' Arhachnortarani Hasdadout'ean 35-Ameagi Arht'iw" ("Elaborate Banquet upon the Occasion of the 35th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Diocese"), The Gotchnag, December 17, 1932, p. 1273.

As 1932 drew to a close it became obvious that the Primate and his critics were far from reconciliation. Community conscious members were skeptical about the growing tendencies toward dissention which hindered the effective activities of the Primate.

In 1933 the pendulum swung even more to the extreme. Criticism against the Primate by the Tashnag press influenced not only public opinion but opened the door to emotional hostilities.

A Diocesan Convention, over which the Primate presided, was convened on January 21, 1933, in St. Illuminator Church in New York.[1] In his opening remarks Archbishop Tourian cited the efforts he had made to render the activities of the Diocese more effective. He made no attempt to conceal his discontent with those individuals and organizations which sowed seeds of argument and hatred and which blocked efforts for compromise and peace.

> I expect that the national organizations and societies support the Diocese in the best possible way and that they not treat it indignantly as they would any archaic or useless institution. Any national organization must exhibit a sense of respect toward the Diocese because this institution is the heart of the Armenian community.[2]

Following the Primate's address a report was presented by Haig Smsarian, a community leader and church delegate from New Jersey. Smsarian had attended the National

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, January 21-22, 1933, p. 5.

[2] Ibid., p. 12.

Ecclesiastical Assembly at Ēchmiadzin on November 10, 1932, which elected Archbishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian of Erevan as the Catholicos of All Armenians.

The Tashnag oriented delegates found the report unsatisfactory and inconclusive. They criticized Smsarian for not objecting to several procedural discrepancies at the Assembly in Ēchmiadzin. Soviet-Ēchmiadzin relations were also discussed, during which delegates noted that the Assembly at Ēchmiadzin had been hastily convened by the order of Soviet authorities who thus intended to deprive a large portion of delegates from the diaspora from attending the Assembly. However, the Tashnag delegates were pleased with the election of the new Pontiff, who, more than any other ranking churchman in Armenia, had been sympathetic to Tashnag ideology, at least in the past.

The Tashnag oriented delegates strongly criticized a second report presented by the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese. They demanded the resignation of the Central Executive Committee and of Archbishop Tourian on the basis that both had failed to provide effective leadership.[1]

In the following months criticism against the Archbishop intensified with the intent of reducing his authority and thereby forcing him to resign. As Tashnag aggressiveness increased, however, the Archbishop remained more resolute in his position, bringing the conflict into an open confrontation. The harsher the treatment the Archbishop received from the Tashnag Party, the more respect and support he won from their opponents.

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[1] "Zhankod Zēnk' Mĕ" ("A Rusty Weapon"), The Gotchnag, April 8, 1933, p. 317.

4. Crisis of the Armenian Tri-color

A third controversy which contributed immensely to the deepening rift between the Primate and his adversaries centered upon the display of the Armenian Tri-color on Armenian Day at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago on July 1, 1933. This incident had far-reaching repercussions. In one form or another it detonated a string of explosive situations which separated the Armenian Church into the "Tashnag Church" and "Rhamagavar Church" in America.

For a fuller understanding of the July 1 incident, a brief background statement will prove useful. Since the collapse of the Armenian Republic in 1920, the Tri-color, the symbol of an independent Armenia, had become a source of bitter dispute among the political groups and Armenians of the diaspora.[1] The Tashnag Party held the Tri-color in high esteem, since the party still considered itself a government in exile. Armenians of no political affiliation originally also respected the Tri-color as long as it symbolized Armenia.

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[1] The following essays treat the origin and development of the Tri-color. Papkēn Giwlēsērian, "Haygagan Trōshe" ("The Armenian Flag"), The Taurus, March 22, 1919, pp. 437-438; August 29, 1919, pp. 555-558; Papkēn Giwlēsērian, "Haygagan Zinanshane" ("The Armenian Insignia"), The Taurus, March 15, 1919, pp. 164-165.

However, the political opponents of the Tashnags rejected the Tri-color.

As antagonism among the partisan groups mounted and as the Tashnag Party increased its propaganda against Soviet Armenia, those opposed to the Tashnag Party, as well as those of moderate leanings, began to have second thoughts about the Tri-color. It had now become solely identified with the Tashnag Party rather than with Armenia, the Fatherland. Consequently, in every Armenian community the Tri-color became the source for bitter controversy and in some instances the cause of bloodshed. Armenian schools, clubs, and mass meetings became scenes of violence, particularly on May 28 when Armenian Independence Day was observed by Tashnag sympathizers.

In America these sentiments exploded upon the occasion of the Century of Progress International Exposition (CPIE) which was held in Chicago on July 1, 1933.[1] Several Armenian merchants were asked by the organizers of the CPIE to participate in the activities of the day. As a result, a group of Armenians, chiefly of Protestant persuasion, formed the Armenian Committee of the CPIE. This Committee was not accountable to the Diocese for its activities, but was simply a local independent group, responsible to the organizers of the CPIE.[1] However, the Committee considered it appropriate to invite Archbishop Tourian to preside over the festivities of Armenian Day at the CPIE. In compliance with protocol, the Armenian Committee asked the local Armenian Church Trustees to invite Archbishop Tourian to preside over Armenian Day at the CPIE. The Church Trustees extended the invitation to the Primate, anticipating that he also would celebrate Divine Liturgy and attend the commencement exercises of the Armenian school.

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[1] Atamian, The Armenian Community, pp. 360-362; Roy, p. 407; Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Badmout'ean Hamar, Vol. III: Tourian Srpazan Anmegh Zohě Erhakoyn Trōshin ("Bishop Tourian, Innocent Victim of the Tri-color"). (New York: Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, 1934), p. 10.

As the news of the Archbishop's impending visit to Chicago was announced, simultaneously the Armenian Tri-color issue came to the fore. Archbishop Tourian was hesitant to give an affirmative answer to the Committee unless he was assured that the Tri-color would not be displayed at the CPIE. The Primate's insistence that no flag be displayed was prompted by his desire to spare Armenians unnecessary controversy and violence.[2] The Armenian Committee complied with the wish of the Primate and decided to fly the American flag rather than the Tri-color. The Germans had followed a similar practice.

During a mixed meeting of the Armenian Committee and representatives of various Armenian organizations, the Tashnag representative insisted that Senator King from the state of Washington speak on the radio on Armenian Day at CPIE. Senator King's political sympathies strongly lay with the Tashnag Party, and he was known for his forceful and uncompromising stand against the Soviets. The non-Tashnag Armenians were reluctant to endorse the Senator. As the disagreement deepened, the Tashnag Party became even more adamant in its stand and threatened to boycott Armenian Day at the Exposition unless the Armenian Committee either allowed Senator King to speak or the Tri-color to be displayed.[1] The Armenian Committee, however, emphatically rejected the Tashnag ultimatum and agreed not to display the Tri-color upon the podium nor to allow Senator King to speak. The Primate was subsequently notified of the final decision of the Armenian Committee.

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[1] "Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Notice of the National Central Executive Committee"), The Gotchnag, August 5, 1933, p. 739.

[2] Ibid., p. 738.

Opening day for the CPIE was set for May 27. Each nationality that was represented at the Exposition was requested to participate in the parade, bearing its own national flag. The Armenians did not march in this parade due to the flag controversy which was not yet reconciled among themselves.[2] Archbishop Tourian attended the Exposition on July 1. Armenian Day activites at the fair took place at the Hall of

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Tourian Srpazan Anmegh Zohe Erhakoyn Trōshin*, pp. 12-13.

[2] H. K. Hovagimian, "Haygagan Orě Shik'agoyi Hamashkharhayin Ts'outs'ahantēsin Mēch" ("Armenian Day at World's Fair at Chicago"), *Hairenik*, July 8, 1933.

Science in an open air amphitheatre. Contrary to previous arrangements and prior to the designated hour for the beginning of the program, "a woman bearing a flag (Tri-color), accompanied by about twenty children bearing smaller flags of the same character, walked to the platform and placed said flag on the platform."[1] Pandemonium broke loose among the people. The Armenian Committee then informed Major Felix J. Streyckmans that they could not proceed with the ceremonies if the Tri-color remained on the platform since it would arouse mixed feelings among the audience and among various political groups in the community. After much persuasion, the flag was removed from the platform but placed directly in front of the platform. The Armenian Committee made the same objection to this gesture.

Consequently, a squad of fifty policemen was called in to restore order in the audience which by now was divided over the issue of the Tri-color and was rioting. Major Streyckmans then conferred with Archbishop Tourian, who refused to proceed with the ceremonies or to speak until the flags were removed. The Primate explained that, if he proceeded with the ceremonies under the Tri-color, it would mean that he was taking political sides and was endorsing the following of that flag. This would create dissension, he argued, not only in America, but it could result in reprisals against Armenians living in Soviet Russia. The Archbishop further stated that this was an American meeting. Therefore, in order to avoid all difficulties and not to implicate the Church in any political controversy, he would proceed only under the American flag.[1]

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[1] This quotation is taken from a copy of the Affidavit filed with the State of Illinois County of Cook, SS, on February 22, 1934, by Felix J. Streyckmans, the Chairman of the Committee on Nationalities of a Century of Progress International Exposition, who was in charge of the program. The Affidavit has been made available by Attorney Dickran Boyajian of Watertown, Massachusetts.

Major Streyckmans related this information to those responsible for the display of the Tri-color and asked for its removal. However, his request was rejected. Consequently, Major Streyckmans made an announcement to the audience relating what the Archbishop had stated to him and informing them that the Armenian Committee would not proceed unless the flag was removed. The question was put to a vote, whereupon about ninety percent of the people present voted in favor of removal of the Tri-color. A Tashnag spokesman then approached Major Streyckmans, explaining that those who wished the flag to remain had not understood him. Thereupon, one of the leaders was asked to translate what had been said into Armenian and another vote was taken. Once again the audience voted in favor of removing the flag.

As soon as the outcome of the vote was announced, a Tashnag adherent picked up a camp chair and struck the Chief of Police of the CPIE, who was in civilian dress. Others joined in the fighting with the police and among themselves. Some became frightened and ran away. Finally, order was restored and the ceremonies resumed without display of the flag. No further trouble erupted during the afternoon and evening performances.[1]

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[1] "Haygagan Orě Ew Kordzatir Hantsnakhoumpě" ("The Armenian Day and the Executive Committee"), The Gotchnag, August 12, 1933, p. 761.

However, what followed in the weeks and months ahead was far from calm, either for the Primate or for the Armenian community in America. As thorny as other issues were, they were minor compared to this crisis which irreparably severed the relationship between the Primate and his adversaries. The Tashnag press took up the cudgel and accused the Primate of Communist sympathies. It became increasingly critical of him. For the Tashnag the request for the removal of the flag was comparable to insulting the Armenian nation.

For nearly every day of the next six months, until his assassination on December 24, the Hairenik carried malicious articles against the Primate. The paper was flooded with letters of protest against him. The Tashnag community began to call the Archbishop an "impostor, fraud, and traitor."[2] It was not long before these protesting voices called for the resignation of the Primate whom they regarded as a man unworthy of the exalted office he held. An editorial entitled, "An

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[1] Streyckman, Affidavit, February 22, 1934.

[2] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 362.

Undeserving Primate" demanded removal of the Archbishop.

> By his undesirable conduct in Chicago, Archbishop Tourian sentenced himself to moral death. The Armenians of America have no recourse but to banish him from his exalted office. The Armenian communities must consider it their national responsibility to morally censure this unworthy clergyman and must mobilize all legal avenues to impeach him.[1]

Needless to say, the supporters of the Primate raised questions and made counter-charges by labeling the Tashnag Party as a terrorist group whose political and ideological loyalties lay with the Nazis and Fascists.[2]

It was at this time that the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese held a meeting to listen to the explanations of the Archbishop concerning the latest developments. Subsequently, the Central Executive Committee issued a "Declaration" on July 26, 1933 stating in Section 5 that "... the Primate as always, declared that, as he has proved by his acts in the past, he has respect for our national Tri-color."[3] The "Declaration" also appeared in the Armenian press of all factions and brought relative calm to the tense atmosphere. However, much as the calm precedes the storm, it was of short duration. Three days later, the *Panvor* ("The Worker"), the official publication of the HOG (The Armenian Bolshevik Party or Progressive League), carried on the front page of its July 29, 1933, issue a facsimile of a letter sent to HOG on July 19, 1933, by Archbishop Ghewont Tourian bearing his signature.

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[1] Editorial, "Anarzhan Arhachnort Mĕ" ("An Undeserving Primate"), *Hairenik*, July 12, 1933.

[2] Atamian, *The Armenian Community*, p. 381.

[3] "Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean," *The Gotchnag*, August 5, 1933, p. 738.

> I prevented the use of the Tri-color on Armenian Day at the Chicago Exhibition because I considered it a manifestation of revolt and disdain against the state organization of Present Armenia.[1]

Far from letting the matter rest, the Armenian community was enraged. While the Tashnag Party condemned the Archbishop's partisan politics and his affiliations with the OGPU, the non-Tashnag community contended that the Archbishop had been insulted by Tashnag allegations and that he was indeed a pious churchman dedicated to his service. They further contended that he held no connections with the Soviets, his sole commitment being to Ēchmiadzin and the Pontiff.

While all shades of interpretation have been given to the Tri-color crisis by individuals and by groups, there were some who thought that prudence might have been another road on which the Primate could have walked.

5. Assault on the Primate at the Church Picnic

The Tashnag press gave no indication of ceasing its attacks against the Primate. Instead, it vehemently encouraged its adherents to the extreme and openly advocated the use of violence toward their adversaries. One article in the

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Tourian Srpazan Anmegh Zohě Erhakoyn Trōshin*, pp. 16-17.

Hairenik ended its scornful remarks against the Primate and his supporters with the following words:

> The day of judgement will come. It is then that the Armenian people will demand their due from the so-called Armenian traitors. Those who defile our flag cannot be forgiven.[1]

Repudiation of the Primate by elders set an example for the younger people to follow. The Hairenik devoted the fourth page of each issue to articles in English for the edification of the American-born Armenians. Among these articles often were found satirical pieces written by various youth referring to the Primate with such derogatory names as "pig" or "pony".[2]

Anti-Primate propaganda did not end with the press but was intensified through mass meetings organized by the Tashnag Party in major cities. This harassment and denunciation of the Primate climaxed in the assault on the Primate at an annual outing sponsored by the Church of Our Saviour of Worcester at the Kapriēlian Farm in Westboro, Massachusetts, on August 13, 1933.[3] Archbishop Tourian was invited by the Church Trustees of the Worcester Church to celebrate Divine

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[1] S. D. Vahakn, "Bayk'are Erhakoynin Tēm" ("Crusade Against the Tri-color"), Hairenik, August 19, 1933.

[2] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Badmout'ean Hamar, Vol. IV: Gazmagerbeal Ahapegchout'iwn ("Organized Terrorism") (New York: Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, 1934), p. 12.

[3] "Bishop Thurian of Armenian Church Beaten," Worcester Daily Telegram, August 14, 1933; Editorial, "Amōtali P'ortsē̌" ("Disgraceful Act in Worcester"), The Gotchnag, August 28, 1933, pp. 797-798.

Liturgy on the Feast of the Virgin Mary, this to be followed by a picnic in the afternoon. On the same afternoon a rival outing was held in Grafton, organized by the Tashnag Party. At this outing Tashnag leaders made several references to the Tri-color incident and spoke in a derogatory way about the Primate. These utterances incited certain of the young members against the Primate.

During the course of the afternoon, several of those at the Grafton picnic traveled to Westboro in a truck. As the Archbishop was about to pronounce his benediction, they attacked him from behind.[1] Fists, clubs, and stones flew in all directions as supporters of the Primate and their opponents engaged in physical combat. It is believed that more serious casualties would have resulted had it not been for the intervention of the police. Five of the attackers escaped, but two were arrested. The reason the Tashnag Party offered for the attack was that the Archbishop had insulted the Armenian flag in July at the World's Fair in Chicago.[2]

This episode was deplored by the Armenian community in general. The *Hairenik*, however, did not place the entire blame on the assailants, but recalled the Tri-color controversy in Chicago, which, in their opinion, had encouraged the Tashnag sympathizers.[1] In an article relating to this episode, the reporter in the Hairenik wrote the following:

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[1] "Ousdri Hay Geank'ēn ("Armenian Life in Worcester"), *The Gotchnag*, August 26, 1933, pp. 810-811; Editorial, "Ousdri Dkhour Michatēbě" ("A Sad Episode in Worcester"), *Baikar*, August 19, 1933.

[2] "Bishop Thurian of Armenian Church Beaten," *Worcester Daily Telegram*, August 14, 1933.

> The incident in Worcester finally proved that Archbishop Ghewont has become a source of scandal for our community and cannot perform his duties without ushering in new problems for the Armenians of America. ... A Primate who has shown disrespect for the flag and has been attacked, can no longer be tolerated by the Armenian community.[2]

The Baikar, on the other hand, the leading voice of the non-Tashnag Armenians, observed that Worcester was not an isolated issue but the result of a wicked and misguided campaign and the continuation of treacherous scandals which had plagued the Armenian community for the previous twenty-five years. The Baikar called upon the Tashnags to put a stop to these acts of violence and no longer to corrupt the minds and souls of the youth. The Primate reassured of support by the opponents of the Tashnag Party who organized a national movement requesting the dismissal of Tashnags from every office in the Diocese.[3]

Talks of dissension were circulating. The non-Tashnag elements charged the Tashnag Party with plotting against

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[1] Editorial, "Arhachnortin Dzdezn Ou Anor Badaskhanadounerě" ("The Beating of the Primate and Those Responsible"), Hairenik, August 17, 1933.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Editorial, "Bēdk' Ē Harkoui Garkabahout'iwnĕ" ("Discipline Must be Respected"), Baikar, August 24, 1933.

Ēchmiadzin by attempting to divide the Armenians and thus cutting the last ties between Armenians and their Fatherland. Armenians everywhere were made aware of the situation and were requested to support the Primate whose loyalty toward Ēchmiadzin was steadfast.

The Tashnag Party, on the other hand, held the Archbishop solely responsible for the volatile situation. They insisted upon his dismissal, which they felt ought to be acted upon at the next Diocesan Convention to be held in early September.

E. Division in the Armenian Church

It was factional politics and not religion that caused the turmoil and dissension in the Armenian Church in America. Partisan news media of the Rhamagavar and Tashnag parties were constantly at sword's point. The Hnch'ag and Bolshevik Armenians favored more radical and violent confrontations. The Hnch'ag motto was "to be either on the side of the Tricolor, and therefore with the Tashnag Party, or on the side of Soviet Armenia."[1]

The atmosphere became increasingly tense as preparations got underway for the Annual Diocesan Convention. The less skeptical hoped that the forthcoming Convention would serve to establish temporary peace and harmony. Instead, the

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[1] Editorial, "Bēdk' Ē Khorats'nel Baykarě" ("The Crusade Must be Intensified"), Baikar, August 29, 1933.

Convention ushered a new problem into the Church, one that would cause much trouble at the time and in the years to come.

One major issue among the communities was the problem of choosing delegates in parishes which contained these rival factions. Partisan agitation in communities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Watertown, and New Britain touched off such a storm of violence that many times police had to be summoned to maintain peace and order in the conferences where Diocesan delegates were to be elected. The forthcoming Diocesan Convention was scheduled for September 2-3, 1933, in St. Illuminator Church in New York. Reports told of delegates and people coming armed to the sessions.[1]

1. Disruption of the Diocesan Convention, September 2-3, 1933

The Diocesan Convention convened amidst one of the most tense situations in the history of the Armenian Church in America.[2] Bishop Hovsēp' Garabedian presided at the Convention. After recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the meeting was called to order, and a letter from Archbishop Tourian, dated September 2, was read.

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[1] "Eresp'pokhanagan Zhoghov" ("The Diocesan Convention"), Baikar, September 6, 1933; Roy, p. 407.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn Amerigayi Hayots' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovin ("Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), New York, September 2-3, 1933, p. 5.

> Your Excellency, Bishop Hovsēp' Garabedian:
>
> Due to ill health and upon the advice of my physician, I am forced not to preside at the Diocesan Convention. I should like to request that your Grace preside at the Convention, read my opening address, and present my blessings and well-wishes to the delegates for the success of the Convention.[1]

Traditionally, the Convention was open to the public. Because of the exceptionally large and boisterous crowd, it was practically impossible to maintain parliamentary procedure. Delegates were at variance over procedural matters. Political intrigue was apparent behind the commotion. Owing to the unusually tense atmosphere, one segment of the delegates moved to end the first session and to reconvene on Sunday, holding the session behind closed doors in the Church. They appealed to Bishop Garabedian, who consented to the decision. "Due to the exceptional circumstances of this Convention, I deem it necessary that the next session be a closed one."[2]

Contrary to this decision, the Tashnag delegates wished an open session. Ignoring the Bishop's decision, they ruled that the doors of the Convention could not be shut. Thirty seven delegates then appealed to Primate Tourian at his residence to have the Convention removed to the Holy Cross Church or some other appropriate location with a more peaceful atmosphere.[1] The Primate then summoned Bishop Garabedian to his residence and informed him that the remaining sessions of the Convention were to be continued in the Grand Suite of the Hotel Martinique in New York City. Bishop Garabedian assured the Primate that his instructions would be implemented.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, September 2-3, 1933, p. 5.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

However, on the following day, September 3, Archbishop Tourian was notified that Bishop Garabedian had not informed the delegates of the new arrangements. Moreover, he had presided at the rump convention of the dissident faction held at the church hall of St. Illuminator Church. Consequently, Father Mamprē Kalfaian, pastor of the Holy Cross Church in Union City, New Jersey, was instructed by the Primate to preside at the legitimate Convention in the Hotel Martinique.[2] The chairman of the legitimate Convention, Maghak' Bērbērian invited the delegates of the rump convention by telephone to join them at the duly recognized and legitimate Diocesan Convention at the Hotel Martinique. This was to no avail, as Khosrov Babaian, a delegate at the rump convention, insisted upon the legitimacy of their own convention which they were determined to continue. In effect, the existence of two conventions marked the beginning of the division of the Armenian Church in America.

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[1] Ibid., p. 9.; "Amerigahay Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově" ("The Diocesan Convention of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, September 9, 1933, p. 858.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, September 2-3, 1933, pp. 12-13.

Meanwhile, the delegates at the Hotel Martinique continued their proceedings. Father Kalfaian was invited to read the opening address of the Primate, which included the following salient observations:

> There are moments in the lives of individuals, as well as nations, which often become blessed moments, if the individuals perceive the situation in its proper context. This period which we are now undergoing may become the most significant in the history of the Armenians of America.[1]

The Diocesan Convention proceeded with its deliberations and unanimously endorsed the policies of the Primate. The delegates at the rump convention voted for the dismissal of the Archbishop.[2] Delegates at the rump convention claimed the Primate and his supporters were the dissenting minority whose political views were strongly pro-Soviet and who were instruments in the hands of the Bolsheviks.[3] Minutes of the two conventions lack objectivity, thereby making it difficult to determine the size and character of each. Each convention elected its own Central Executive Committee. Both sides claimed legitimacy and, subsequently, victory. Both sides appealed to Ēchmiadzin for the Pontiff's sanction. Thus it was that in early September, 1933, the Armenian community in America was torn by a maze of factions which in turn caused division of the Church.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[2] "Arhachnort Ghewont Ark'ebisgobos Hrazharets'ouadz" ("Primate, Archbishop Ghewont Deposed"), *Hairenik*, September 6, 1933.

[3] "Inch' Gĕsē Amerigean Mamoulĕ" ("What the American Press Says"), *Baikar*, September 7, 1933; "Primate Ousted by Armenians for Flag Slur," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 4, 1933.

2. Aftermath of the Diocesan Convention

The days following the Diocesan Convention witnessed extreme intensification of tension between those loyal to the Diocese and the dissidents as they anxiously awaited Ēchmiadzin's decision about the legitimacy of each convention. Upon completion of the Diocesan Convention in the Hotel Martinique on September 3, Father Kalfaian, the Central Executive Committee, and the supporters of the Diocese presented their filial respect to the Primate and commended him for his unblemished courage in the face of the events of the last several months.[1] A telegram dated September 4 was sent to the Pontiff reaffirming their loyalty to Archbishop Tourian and to Ēchmiadzin.[2] Meanwhile, the dissident faction notified the Archbishop of his dismissal from the office of Primacy and then informed the Pontiff in Ēchmiadzin that Primate Tourian had been deposed.[3]

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[1] "Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Nakhakahě Ew Tiwaně Gě Shnorhaworen Arhachnort Srpazaně" ("The President and Executive of the Diocesan Convention Congratulate the Primate"), *Baikar*, September 10, 1933.

[2] "Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Herhakirě Amenayn Hayots' Vehaparh Hayrabedin" ("The Telegram of the Diocesan Convention to the Catholicos of All Armenians"), *Baikar*, September 10, 1933.

[3] "Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Tiwani" ("Notice of the National Diocesan Convention"), *Hairenik*, September 9, 1933.

As the two factions awaited a reply from Ēchmiadzin, they continued their denunciation and repudiation of each other. In a letter dated September 5, Archbishop Tourian inquired of Bishop Hovsēp' Garabedian the reason for his reluctance in announcing to the delegates of the rump convention the change in the location of the Diocesan Convention.[1] Bishop Garabedian provided the following explanation:

> You demand to know why I have not informed the delegates of the change in meeting places. To satisfy your Grace's demand, I hereby inform you that due to the seriousness of the prevailing situation, I was not able to announce the change in meeting places.[2]

The dissident group deplored Bishop Garabedian's attitude and change of position in the entire affair. They accused him of opportunism with the following words:

> Bishop Hovsēp' Garabedian's reply is ambiguous and may be interpreted as meaning that in view of the prevailing situation, the order of Archbishop Tourian was indiscreet and therefore he ignored it.[3]

It was rumored that Bishop Garabedian preferred to remain silent and preside at the rump convention under threat of his life.[4]

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[1] "Hovsēp' Ebisgobosi Vgayout'iwnē 27RT. I Mēch Dirogh Gats'out'ean Masin" ("The Testimony of Bishop Garabedian of the Prevailing Situation in the 27th Street Church"), Baikar, September 8, 1933.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] "Rhamgavarnerou Dghayagan Ch'k'meghank'nerě" ("The Childish Excuses of the Rhamgavars"), Hairenik, September 10, 1933.

[4] After the murder of Archbishop Tourian, Bishop Garabedian submitted his testimony to the District Attorney in New York. He revealed that in fear of his life he was forced to

A telegram dated September 11 was received by Archbishop Tourian from the Pontiff, Khorēn I in Ēchmiadzin. This cable caused immense joy and relief in Diocesan circles but became a bitter source of resentment and displeasure to the dissident group. It read as follows:

> We announce our satisfaction and blessings to the members of the Diocesan Convention and for the confidence expressed by your community. We express our blessings and confidence in your helpful work and your righteous course of action.[1]

Ēchmiadzin's position and the Pontiff's support of Archbishop Tourian further aggravated the situation and alienated the Tashnag Party even more. Opposition became extremely bitter and more barriers to reunion appeared. The resulting split in the Armenian Church was so serious that concerned individuals considered it a permanent state with no room for reunion among the divided brethren.

In view of Ēchmiadzin's position, the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese issued a "Declaration" on September 20 dealing with the recent controversy. This "Declaration" emphatically resolved that Archbishop Tourian was still the Primate and that the rump convention's decision to depose the

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remain silent about the change of meeting place. Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Gazmagerbeal Ahapegchout'iwn, p. 20.

[1] "Vehap'arh Hayrabedė Vsdahout'iwn Gĕ Haydnē Srpazan Arhachnortin" ("His Holiness, the Catholicos, Expresses Confidence in the Primate"), Baikar, September 12, 1933.

Primate was absurd and unconstitutional.[1] The Central Executive Committee cited three articles of the Constitution which delineated the duties of the Diocesan Convention.

> 1. To elect and to retire the Prelate of the Diocese, with the approval of the Catholicos of All Armenians. (Article 21, Section 6).
>
> 2. To hear the complaints against the Prelate of the Diocese, and if necessary, to submit these complaints with their conclusions to the Catholicos of All Armenians. To examine and to decide upon the complaints against the Central Executive Committee. (Article 21, Section 10).
>
> 3. The Prelate of the Diocese is elected by the Diocesan Convention for a period of four years, and is approved by the Catholicos of All the Armenians. He can be re-elected. (Article 24)[2]

The "Declaration" continued to stress that the clergy, parish councils, and the populace must remain unwavering in their faith and confidence in the Primate and Diocesan leadership.

This "Declaration" was followed by yet another on October 23, issued by Archbishop Tourian.[3] The Primate's intent was to counteract the dissident "Central Executive Committee" which was disseminating orders and communiques to pastors and trsustees in the name of the Diocese. This was contributing to the state of confusion.

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Official Notice of the Central Executive Committee"), The Gotchnag, October 7, 1933, pp. 954-956.

[2] Azkayin Sahmanat'rout'iwn Amerigayi Hayots", ("National Constitution of the Armenians of America") (New York, 1934), pp. 21-22, 60.

[3] Ibid.

Tashnag-sponsored indignation rallies and mass meetings to discredit Archbishop Tourian were becoming frequent in Armenian communities. The Tashnag followers hoped to show the extent of their disenchantment with the Primate who, they said, had disgraced the Armenian Tri-color. Father Ghewont Martougēsian of Lowell, Massachusetts became the principal leader of these demonstrations. He toured many cities, always arousing the audiences with his fiery speeches and dramatic gestures, such as kneeling and kissing the Armenian Tri-color. Father Martougēsian was repeatedly warned to disassociate himself from such activities unbecoming a clergyman. He was also reminded not to omit the Primate's name during the "Special Intermission" section of the Divine Liturgy. His failure to recognize the authority of the Primate would result in severe censure from the Pontiff.

In order to end the malaise and to restore national confidence, the Supreme Spiritual Council in Ēchmiadzin passed a resolution during their October 25, 1933 meeting stating that the rump convention was illegal and that their decision to depose the Primate was deplorable. The Council sanctioned the actions of the Armenian Committee and the Primate against the use of the Tri-color at the CPIE in Chicago. The Council further urged Archbishop Tourian to convene a new Diocesan Convention in which both sides were to participate.[1] However, these exhortations went unheeded because both ecclesiastical and political leaders failed to exercise foresight. Had these leaders realized the gravity of the situation, the split in the Church could have been averted. But the shadows of yet larger crises hovered over the Armenian Church in America.

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, Gazmagerbeal Ahapegch'out'iwn, pp. 21-23.

3. Activities of the Dissidents

The separatist tendencies of the dissident group were clearly outlined as their politico-ecclesiastical platform and appeared in an editorial in the Hairenik.[1]

> 1. Ēchmiadzin under Bolshevik rule has lost her freedom, and subsequently, the authbrity of the Pontiff has plummeted.
>
> 2. Ēchmiadzin has no moral right to keep such a person like Archbishop Ghewont Tourian as Primate against the will of the vast majority, especially since he is a source of dissension and friction.
>
> 3. All of the administrative and executive bodies of our legal Central Executive Committee must immediately cease to recognize the Primacy of Archbishop Ghewont Tourian and must refrain from continuing any further relationship with him in terms of moral or economic support.
>
> 4. In those communities where the church trusteeship is in the hands of Tourian-supporting Rhamgavar Trustees, our concerned compatriots must work to change and replace these officials who are not in agreement with the public will.
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> 5. In those communities where, for diverse reasons, it is impossible to effect the immediate change of those officials who do not concur with the majority will, our

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[1] "Ēchmiadzine Molorets'nelou Jik'erě Ew Mer Tirkn ou Enelik'ě" ("Attempts to Confuse Ēchmiadzin and our Course of Action"), Hairenik, September 13, 1933.

> conscientious compatriots must impose every moral and economic pressure upon those Rhamgavar officials, so that they will immediately sever their support and official relationship from the deposed Primate and the self-imposed administration of the Diocese.

The editorial ended with an appeal to continue the moral and economic boycott against the Primate and the Diocese. The dissident group disregarded the Pontifical decision to reaffirm the Primate in his office. The Hairenik commented upon this in the following way: "It can bear neither a moral nor a practical significance for our community."[1]

The situation became even more grave when the dissident Central Executive Committee elected its own Locum-Tenens, Father Ĕntsag Kazanjian of St. Illuminator Church in New York.[2] This church was also used as Diocesan headquarters. Father Nshan P'ap'azian of Troy, New York, replaced Father Kazanjian in 1933 as Locum-Tenens. Nine clergymen joined the ranks of the dissident group. These were Father Ghewont Martougēsian of Providence, Father Nshan P'ap'azian of Troy, Father Madt'ēos Manigian of Brooklyn, Father Bsag Sarkisian of Philadelphia, Father Eghishē Kasbarian of Troy, Father Housig Nakhnik'ian of Worcester, Father Mesrob Dēr Hovhannēsian of Boston, Father Bedros Mamp'rēian of Detroit, and Father Movsēs

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[1] Editorial, "Gat'oghosin Herhakirĕ" ("The Telegram of the Catholicos"), Hairenik, September 15, 1933.

[2] "Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean Tiwanēn" ("From the Secretariat of the Central Executive Committee"), Hairenik, September 19, 1933.

Dēr Sdep'anian of Chicago.[1] These clergymen formed the "Clergy Union of America."

On October 4, 1933, this union of clergy forwarded a letter to the Pontiff in Ēchmiadzin. They informed the Pontiff of the proceedings of the controversial Diocesan Convention of the previous month. They also cited their grievances and disenchantment with the Primate who, in their opinion, misused and abused his office in the interests of non-ecclesiastical preoccupations.[2] In several cities the clergy and dissident members challenged the legality of the Church Trustees and meetings which were often scenes of violence, necessitating the presence of law enforcement officers to restore peace and order.[3]

These anti-Diocesan and anti-Primate sentiments further intensified in 1933 with the arrival of a Tashnag nationalist, Karekin Njteh, a hero of the February 1920 Revolution against the Bolsheviks.[4] Soon after his arrival in the United States he was instrumental in the organization of a youth group called the Ts'eghagrōn (Armenian Racial Patriots). Njteh's rhetoric inspired many of his Tashnag followers to such an extent that they were imbued with intense hatred for the non-Tashnag Armenians, especially the Rhamgavar Party. Karekin Njteh openly admired Nazism and his intention was to rekindle within the Armenian youth a strong love for their nation. The Ts'eghagrōn youth were constantly indoctrinated with the evils of the Bolshevik system. Njteh advocated guerrilla warfare against the Soviets in order to overthrow the government of Armenia. He expressed willingness to enter into alliance with any nation in order to fight against the Soviets. Unfortunately, in due course, Njteh's philosophy, which began as nationalism, evolved into chauvinism and then racism.

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[1] Eghishē Kasbarian, "Amerigahay Azkayin Egeghets'agan Geank'" ("Armenian-American National Ecclesiastical Life") Vdag ("Armenian Almanac")(Boston; Hairenik Press, 1935), p. 61.

[2] Kasbarian, "Amerigahay Azkayin Egeghets'agan Geank'," Vdag, pp. 45-47.

[3] "Bashdōnagan Zegoyts' Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Official Report of the National Executive Committee"), Hairenik, November 11, 1933.

[4] The details of his activities as a field worker for the Tashnag Party are beyond the scope of this paper. However, some consideration must be given to his work which contributed to important occurrences in this country. "Bost'eni Giragi Orouan Medz Zhoghově" ("Sunday's Mass Meeting in Boston"), Hairenik, October 12, 1933.

The issue over the Tri-color afforded the opportunity for Njteh to sow the seeds of hatred among his followers. The Hairenik press adopted an even harsher position toward the opposition and advocated total separation from the mainstream of Armenian ecclesiastical life. It appears that bitterness and hatred obliterated all fairness, idealism, and reason among Njteh's followers. The Primate with his religious and lay associates were regarded as pharisaic, poisonous, and notorious agents in the hands of their Soviet masters.[1]

4. The Maxim Litvinoff Banquet

Franklin Delano Roosevelt assumed office on March 4, 1933, as the thirty-second President of the United States. As a significant part of the foreign policy of the New Deal, diplomatic relations with Russian were resumed on November 17, 1933, thereby ending the policy of non-recognition which had prevailed since the overthrow of the Provisional Government of Alexander Kerensky in 1917. Trade relations were opened and the Russian government promised to abstain from propaganda activities within the United States.

Maxim Litvinoff was the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Among the numerous telegrams and messages of congratulations sent to him upon the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States was one from Archbishop Tourian. Upon receiving the message from the Archbishop, Litvinoff telegraphed a reply from Washington. The exchange of greetings was as follows:

> On behalf of the Armenians of the United States of America, we beg to convey to you our heartiest good wishes and our admiration for the noble cause you have so eloquently espoused. It has caused us much genuine pleasure and gratification that your great mission has been crowned with success, which will

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[1] Editorial, "Giragi Ōrouan Zhoghovin Imasdn ou Hrahanke" "(The Meaning and Message of Sunday's Meeting"), *Hairenik*, October 12, 1933.

> strengthen the ties between the two greatest Republics and advance their mutual interests for the benefits of mankind and universal peace.

Litvinoff responded, "Thanks [for your] kind telegram and your good wishes."[1]

The Tashnag press once again took issue with Archbishop Tourian, challenging his claim to arrogate to himself the right to speak in the name of the Armenians of the United States. The Tashnag Party criticized his hastiness and charged him with conducting propaganda for the Soviet Union and its "noble cause."[2]

Another complicating factor arose when Archbishop Tourian was invited by Litvinoff to attend a banquet at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City on November 24. Some thirty prominent Armenians also attended the dinner. The Hairenik press admonished Archbishop Tourian for being the only religious figure to attend the function, whereas clergymen of other Russian-dominated countries were conspicuously absent. The Tashnag Party blamed the Primate and the "prominent Armenians" for their conduct which they felt was an "ominous indication" of pro-Soviet sentiments. The feelings of most of the Tashnag followers were expressed in the following remarks:

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[1] Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, p. 53.

[2] Ibid.

> What was a clergyman, whose nation had been raped by the Soviets, and whose church had ordered him abroad on anything but a spiritual mission in the service of the atheistic Soviet regime--what was such a clergyman doing in all decency at such a function and the only clergyman there?
>
> Does this not signify the extent of the Soviets' appreciation of the usefulness of a man who had surrendered the Armenian Church in America to the benefit of the Soviet?[1]

What such political leaders failed to realize was that the disunity--the enemy within--was a direct result of power play in the Church.

5. The Murder of Archbishop Tourian

Early December of 1933 witnessed an unusual lull in the confrontations between rival factions, despite the fact that they were still a long way from resolving their differences. On December 18, with the approach of the holiday season, Archbishop Tourian issued his Christmas letter, a portion of which read:

> I bid that in all the communities of our Diocese and in all segments, love should prevail over hatred, sacrifice over selfishness, forgiveness over vengeance, brotherhood over pride, peace over violence, harmony over turmoil, good over evil, and that life should prevail over death for all of us, official and non-official, so that the Armenian community may be nobly elevated through moral, national, ecclesiastical, and spiritual means for the glory of the nation, church, and fatherland.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 54.

[2] "P'arisets'out'ean Kloukh Kordzots' Mě" ("A Masterpiece of Pharaseeism"), Hairenik, December 21, 1933.

As it was, because the internal harmony of the Armenian communities already had been deeply ruptured, the Archbishop's message come somewhat too late in order to be either convincing or effective.

On Christmas Sunday morning, December 24, 1933, the Armenian faithful made their way through the snowy streets to the Holy Cross Church on 587 West 187th Street in New York to hear the Primate celebrate a solemn episcopal Mass. Other parishioners crowded about the entrance of the church, eager to attend the special services and to catch a glimpse of the Archbishop.

Inside a spirit of unrest swept over the gathering. A hush descended among them as the church organ pealed forth, and a censer bearer led the solemn procession down the aisle. The pungent odor of the incense filled the air. Immediately following the deacon with the censer came fourteen choiristers carrying lighted candles. Behind them walked Bishop Hovsēp' Garabedian, rector of the Church.[1]

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[1] Bishop Garabedian had kept a scrapbook concerning the murder of Archbishop Tourian. In it are news clippings about the murder and pictures of Primate Tourian. Also included are personal reflections by Bishop Garabedian about the tragedy, in which he holds both the Tashnag and Rhamgavar Parties responsible. The scrapbook is located at the church office of Saint James Armenian Church, Watertown, Massachusetts. It was loaned for the purpose of this study through the courtesy of Father Dajad Davidian.

The congregation rose reverently as Archbishop Tourian approached, resplendently gowned in a flowing green and gold robe. On his head rested a towering silver mitre. Diamond-bedecked jewels of the lanchakhach' (pectoral cross) and banagē (medallion) hung from gold chains about his neck. In his left hand he carried a crozier of gold, and with his right hand, a jewel-studded crucifix, with which he gave benediction to the worshippers.

It was 10:28 a.m. when the procession reached the seventh pew from the rear. A parishioner leaned out from the right side of the aisle in an effort to kiss the crucifix or the hand of the Archbishop as a sign of receiving his paternal blessings. Suddenly figures from the pews and center aisle approached the Primate, concealing the activities of a crouching figure within their band. Clutching hands held and seized the Primate. Vicious blows struck the mitre from his head. Someone within the ring of people thrust a dagger twice toward the Primate's heart. The diabolical deed was over in an instant. The Primate staggered in an apparent effort to rest his body on the crozier he carried. It either smashed or broke from under him and the Primate lurched forward, then fell onto the floor, his face tilted toward a picture of the Crucifixion that hung on the wall of the Church.

The congregation was stunned by the suddenness of the attack. Pandemonium broke loose, and the Church became the scene of strife and fighting. Some members from the band of assassins were viciously beaten by the infuriated parishioners while others fled to the exit. In the confusion it was reported that a mysterious figure had fled.

Khosrov Gorgodian, the body-guard of the Primate, helped the Archbishop to his feet and assisted him to the vestry near the entrance of the Church from whence he had emerged. As the commotion within the Church increased, a patrolman, Charles Ubelacher, one of those despatched earlier by the Wadsworth Avenue Police Station of the 34th Precinct, pulled out his revolver and rushed inside the Church. He was joined by another policeman on guard outside the Church. The appearance of the policemen restrained the half-hysterical congregation somewhat. A choir girl noticed a blood-stained knife on the floor. It was a large butcher knife with an oak handle and eight inch blade. She lifted it carefully and carried it to the altar.

Inside the vestry the fallen Archbishop was surrounded by police, detectives, doctors, and a few members of the congregation. The physician who stood by was helpless to restore a life that was fast ebbing away. As the Archbishop lapsed into silence, he feebly uttered his last words, "Oknē indzi Dēres" ("Help me, My Lord").[1] Doctor Thomas Gonzales, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner for New York City, pronounced the Archbishop dead. The Primate's body was placed in a police car and taken away. The two prisoners and as many witnesses as could be crowded into another vehicle were driven to the Wadsworth Avenue Police Station. The two who were apprehended were Madt'ēos Lēylēgian, the alleged knife-wielder, and Nshan Sarkisian, who pinioned the Archbishop's arms. Later, seven co-assassins were also apprehended and found guilty of manslaughter in the first degree. In the milling mass a mysterious figure had escaped from the scene. On the records of the District Attorney this unknown person became "Mr. X".[1]

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[1] Avedis Derounian, "The Assassination of the Archbishop," Real Detective, p. 25.

The name of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation or Tashnag Party has frequently been associated with the vicious murder. With a spontaneous cry, the parishioners shouted "Tashnag! The Tashnags are the assassins," as they stood horrified at the appalling tragedy which had been enacted within the sanctity of the house of God.[2]

The New York Police were confronted with excruciating difficulties following the murder. Despite the overwhelming number of witnesses, many were reluctant to testify against the alleged assailants. Newspapers reported rumors that others also had been marked for death by the assassin troupe.[3]

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[1] Alexander H. Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," The Master Detective, July, 1935, p. 69.

[2] Derounian, "The Assassination of the Archbishop," Real Detective, p. 89.

[3] Ibid.

The affairs of the Holy Cross Church remained in a state of confusion. The Church could not open her doors for services. Blood had been spilled within the sacred precincts and reconsecration would be necessary before religious services could be held.

The strangeness of the crime, with its many political and religious aspects, created intense interest and speculation throughout the country. The Armenian Press was particularly outspoken in its interpretations of the assassination. Some newspapers demanded immediate punishment of the Tashnags as the instigators of the plot. Others were just as vehement in their demands that the Tashnags be vindicated by giving the prisoners a speedy trial.[1] The only paper that refrained from condemning the crime was that of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation--the *Hairenik*.[2]

The hierarchical Sees of the Armenian Church were also unanimous in their condemnation of the crime. The hierarchs of the Church exhorted their faithful, particularly the political factions, to refrain from violence and murder in settling their differences. The Pontiff issued an encyclical, dated March 16, 1934, which best represents the prevailing mood and concern of the hierarchy.

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Badmout'ean Hamar*, Vol. V: *Azkataw Eghernĕ ew Tadabardout'iwnĕ* ("The National Crime and Its Condemnation") (New York: The Gotchnag Press, 1935), pp. 41-82; Editorial, "Anartaranali Ojirĕ" ("The Unjustifiable Crime"), *Baikar*, December 30, 1933; "Ōrouan Tade Azkayin Ē" ("The Case of the Day is National"), *The Gotchnag*, January 27, 1934, p. 75.

[2] Editorial, "Mdadzoumov, Och T'ē Zkats'oumov" ("With Rationale, Rather than Emotion"), *The Gotchnag*, April 21, 1934, p. 363.

> With this, our Pontifical encyclical, we express our deep sorrow due to the senseless and tragic crime perpetrated against our beloved son, the Most Reverend Archbishop Leon Tourian. We condemn the murderers and the murder as a product of a deluded mentality and I exhort you to be vigilant and to drop this purposeless controversy and feud, and especially to stay distant from impulsive actions, which are detrimental and unbecoming to a cultured nation and people.[1]

Other non-Armenian dignitaries and churchmen also castigated the crime and its plotters, sharing with the Armenians in their immense loss.[2] One such person was Cosmos Gordon Lang, the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom the late Archbishop Tourian had a close acquaintance.[3]

Funeral arrangements were made for the Primate's burial from the Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John the Divine on Amsterdam Avenue and 110th Street, for Monday, January 1, 1934, at 10:00 a.m. The body of the martyred Archbishop was borne in solemn procession from St. Illuminator Church to the Cathedral. More than fifty policemen were assigned to guard the body in anticipation of further trouble. Secret agents intermingled with the crowd, hoping to gain further information concerning the crime.[4] During a solemn high Mass the last rites were administered to the Archbishop by Bishop Hovsēp' Garabedian and Father Mamp're Kalfaian, with the assistance of Bishop William T. Manning, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, and Archbishop Athenagoras of the Greek Orthodox Church. The entire service lasted three and one-half hours, during which individuals of many faiths offered tributes to the Archbishop.

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[1] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Azkataw Egherně Ew Tadabardout'iwně*, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-94.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

[4] Both the *New York Times* on January 1, 1934, and the

Archbishop Tourian's abbreviated Primacy represents one of the most momentous and critical periods in the history of the Diocese. Archbishop Tourian was an individual who was both criticized and highly acclaimed, both greatly loved and strongly detested. History is full of expensive errors, which is no truer than in the case of the murder of the Archbishop. Whether defamed or vindicated, he was an enigma to his contemporaries and continues to be such for the historian of today.

F. Expansion of Churches

Despite the economic instability of the early 1930s, Armenians in four communities were able to acquire their own houses of worship in 1931. These were the Holy Ascension Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut; Saint John the Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan; Saint James Church in Watertown,

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New York Herald Tribune on January 2, 1934, covered the story of the burial of the Archbishop. Armenian translations of these stories appeared in the Baikar, January 3, 1934, issue.

Massachusetts; and Holy Cross Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts.[1] With the exception of the church structure in Bridgeport, the communities preferred to build new churches rather than to purchase an already existing edifice. The Building Committees of these churches were not overly eager to fashion them in the traditional architectural style of the Armenian Church. The chief concern of the church officials in each community was to have their own premises where the faithful could worship and gather socially.

1. Holy Ascension Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Bridgeport, as a highly industrialized city, attracted many Armenian immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century. By the time of World War I, several hundred Armenians were living in Bridgeport; by the 1930s approximately four to five hundred Armenians had permanently settled in Bridgeport and surrounding towns.[2]

Religious services were held from time to time, especially upon the occasion of baptism, weddings, and funerals. For these ceremonies Armenians used the facilities of Saint Luke Episcopalian Church on Connecticut Avenue. In the absence of an itinerant priest, local Armenian deacons conducted the religious services for the community. This practice continued until 1926 when the need was felt to organize themselves into a more effective parochial community. Consequently, in 1928, a temporary Board of Church Trustees was elected. The members of this first council were Sarkis Bajoyian, Hovhannēs Krikorian, Osgian Ch'ap'out'ian, Hovsep' Ourfalian, and Nahabed Chakrian. These men were entrusted with the task of acquiring a church building for the community.

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[1] Saint James Church in Watertown and Holy Cross Church in Lawrence were consecrated in 1936. The discussion of these communities will be presented in the next chapter.

[2] More information of the Bridgeport community is found in the album Fortieth Anniversary, Holy Ascension Armenian Church, 1931-1971, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Ashjian, pp. 94-99.

In the initial stages, the Church Trustees enjoyed the cooperation of many members of the community, especially that of a group of ladies headed by Haygouhi Krikorian and Haygouhi Nigoghosian. Under the direction of these men and women the community was guided into electing permanent Church Trustees in 1929, with Awedis Dēmirjian as chairman. At the same time a Ladies Auxiliary was formed, headed by Haygouhi Krikorian.

Land for the new church building was purchased for $800; however, the idea of building a new church was abandoned for an already existing edifice on Barnum Avenue, a former Methodist Church which was purchased for $6,000. The church underwent considerable renovations before it was suitable as an Armenian house of worship. On June 14, 1931, Archbishop Ghewont Tourian consecrated the church and named it the Holy Ascension Church. Zawēn T'at'igian served as the Godfather.

Since its consecration, the parish has been served by priests whose tenures have been of short duration.

2. Saint John the Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan

According to available records, the first Armenian known to have settled in Detroit was a young girl named Ester-Nouart of Merzifon, Turkey. She came to this country under Protestant missionary sponsorship, studied medicine, and earned her medical degree.[1] By the latter part of the nineteenth century a number of Armenians were living in Greater Detroit and also in the surrounding towns of Ann Arbor, Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Pontiac. But the Armenian community of Greater Detroit did not exist until the first decade of the 1900s.

The gradual growth of the young community was accelerated in 1914 by the late Henry Ford's publicized five-dollar-a-day wage offer, which induced immigrants of many nationalities to flock to Detroit in ever-increasing numbers. As in other localities, the early arrivals were almost entirely young males who came seeking their fortunes. In 1915 the Armenian community of Detroit was thought to number some three thousand. It has since grown to become one of the larger Armenian communities in the United States with an estimated membership of 25,000.

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[1] For more information on the community of Detroit, consult the commemorative book entitled Twenty-Five Years of Progress, St. John's Armenian Church, 1931-1956, Detroit, Michigan; Ashjian, pp. 107-114.

For many years the community, out of necessity, worshipped only periodically, whenever a visiting clergyman stopped to offer the Divine Liturgy in a Protestant Episcopal Church borrowed for that day. This arrangement, however, proved to be inadequate and prompted the community to elect a committee to pursue the task of establishing an Armenian Church in Detroit. The first Church Trustees were organized in 1912 and petitioned the Diocese in Worcester for a permanent pastor. In 1913 Father Sahag Nazarēt'ian of Fresno was chosen to serve as pastor for the Detroit community, although it did not yet have its own church building. The Reverend Woodruff of Saint John's Episcopal Church offered the facilities of his church after 1:00 p.m. on Sundays, thus making it possible for regular Sunday church services to be held.

Father Nazarēt'ian acted quickly in organizing his parish and in arousing the religious fervor of his constituents. His tenure in Detroit, however, came to an early end in his death in 1922. From his death until the building of the church in 1931, four other pastors served the community under adverse conditions.

In the late twenties, religious services were still being held in Saint John's Episcopal Church. The situation posed many problems because other denominations also made use of the facilities, thereby compelling the Armenians to adhere to a tight schedule. These difficulties convinced the community of the necessity for their own church. In 1928 a Building Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Mihran Dēyirmēnjian. They purchased a site for the proposed church on Oakman Boulevard at a cost of $9,000. The time was less than opportune, as by now the Great Depression had swept the country and Armenians, like all others, felt its impact. Father At'ig Dzots'igian was the leading force behind this fund-raising campaign. He manifested untiring dedication in realizing the building of the church, which was completed in 1931 at a cost of $30,000. On November 22, 1931, the Church was consecrated by Archbishop Tourian and was named Saint John the Baptist Church.[1] Mgrdich P. Kalajian served as the Godfather.

On January 3, 1939, the Armenian Apostolic Society, Inc., was organized for the purpose of planning, financing, and constructing a Cultural Hall to accommodate group activities for the entire community. Alex Manougian became the first chairman of this society.[2] In 1946 the construction of the Cultural Hall was completed.

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[1] In subsequent years the use of the name "Baptist" was discontinued in order not to confuse it with churches of Baptist denomination.

[2] Alex Manougian, the life-time president of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, has distinguished himself in charitable, cultural, and educational philanthropic endeavors.

Owing to the rapid growth of the Armenian community, the exodus of Armenians into the suburbs, and the desire for larger facilities, the Armenians of the Greater Detroit Community purchased land located on 22001 Northwestern Highway in Southfield, Michigan. In September of 1960 a new Cultural Building was built on the site. On November 20, 1966, the new golden dome of the Church was dedicated and consecrated by Archbishop Torkom Manougian, the Primate.[1]

G. Summary and Conclusion

The foregoing chapter is a brief account of the main events leading to the assassination of Archbishop Tourian. In retrospect each of these events represented an escalation of the conflict within the community--a process which culminated in tragedy for the Armenian community and Church both in America and the diaspora. In terms of clues, there was nothing in Primate Tourian's background, personality, or initial activities that would give a hint of what was to happen. He was well prepared for the job in terms of formal education and administrative experience. As to his activities, there is sufficient evidence that he made a genuine attempt to be fair to the various political factions of the community, especially the Tashnags. However, looking back at his decisions, it is possible to point out a number of mistakes in judgment which may have contributed to the tragedy.

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[1] The new church displays characteristic features of Armenian Church architecture and style, especially that of St. Hrhipsimē̈, one of the first and earliest examples of pure Armenian architecture dating back to the seventh century. The architect of St. John's Church was Sourēn Pilawian. Consecration and Dedication, St. John's Armenian Church, Southfield, Michigan, November 20, 1966.

After the Tashnag rebuff of his first attempts at pacification, it became apparent that, in view of the depth of Tashnag alienation, it would not be possible to achieve unity. In simple terms, having recently lost power to Armenian Bolsheviks, the Tashnags regarded the Bolsheviks and their supporters as their mortal enemies. Thus, any suggestion of rapproachment with them was viewed by the Tashnags as tantamount to treason to the cause of free and independent Armenia. Given this type of perception and considering the residual enmity between the Tashnags and their opponents, the resort to violence was not too surprising. Clearly, the Archbishop could not properly gauge the seriousness of the situation. Indeed, had Archbishop Tourian realized the depth of feelings and emotionalism, he might have followed a different course.

For example, his reason for forbidding his clergy to attend secular celebrations of Armenian Memorial Day were not really compelling. It was true that the Tashnags would attempt to turn some observances into propaganda rallies; but so would their opponents wherever the latter had numerical superiority. Nor was it wise for the Archbishop to stress the "Sovietness" of Armenia in his public prayers; he had the choice of simply praying for Armenia as most priests had done for centuries before and would continue to do for decades after the Sovietization of Armenia. More explosive was the issue of the Armenian Tri-color. But here the Archbishop had a clear-cut option, simply that of inaction. In other words, instead of making his appearance conditional upon the removal of the flag, he could have refrained from going to Chicago altogether.

Similarly, one may question the wisdom of leaving the Diocesan Convention of September, 1933, in the hands of a cleric like Bishop Garabedian, although the Primate may not have had a real alternative; yet there exists no satisfactory explanation why he did not heed the suggestion of the Supreme Spiritual Council to call a new Diocesan Convention to bring the factions together. Lastly, the Primate's involvement in the "Litvinoff affair" was beyond the call of duty. A less ideological and brief telegram would have sufficed; also, the Archbishop could have exercised the option of staying away from the Litvinoff banquet. While from our present vantage point it is easy to make the foregoing retrospective criticisms of the late Archbishop, it is clear that things looked different to him in the context of his own milieu. One could not expect him to be a seer; indeed, no one could predict or even envisage the dastardly act of assassination of a Bishop of the Church. But the assassination did take place; and when it did; it not only meant the killing of a priest, but beyond that, it manifested the pathology of a whole nation--the sickness of its collective spirit. Thus, for the martyrdom of the Primate, a whole nation stood condemned, with all of its factions, ideologies, leaders, and organizations. Finally, the assassination had the effect of sealing the existing cleavages and assuring that the bifurcation of the Church and community would continue well into the seventies.

CHAPTER XI

ECCLESIASTICAL CRISIS AND SEARCH FOR UNITY

(1933-1939)

The days following the assassination of Archbishop Tourian were chaotic. Rallies of indignation against the Tashnag Party were held throughout the Armenian community. Because of the uniqueness of the crime, the American press reported daily developments in the case. In New York City mass investigations and arrests of those suspected of complicity were conducted by the police. Radio commentators deplored the Tashnag philosophy as one of terrorism. Nine members of the Tashnag Party were apprehended by the police as the alleged assassins of the Archbishop, and their trial was set for June 7, 1934. All nine were charged with conspiracy to murder.

The Tashnag Party repudiated any direct involvement in the killing of the Archbishop. Unable to influence public opinion about their innocence, the dissident Central Executive Committee severed relations with Ēchmiadzin. In order to determine control of churches, Armenians of opposing camps had to settle their differences in United States courts. Thus, churches whose memberships were preponderantly of non-Tashnag elements came under the control of those loyal to

Ēchmiadzin. The dissidents, however; did claim possession of a few churches, such as Saint Gregory Church in Philadelphia, Saint Stephen Church in New Britain, and SS. Joachim and Anne in West Pullman, Illinois.

Several clergymen made no attempt to conceal their ideological affinities with and sympathies for the Tashnag Party. Father Nshan P'ap'azian, a zealous Tashnag priest from New York, moved his entire family into the confines of the church, claimed legal shelter, obtained police protection, and eventually won St. Illuminator Church on 27th Street for his parish.[1]

In order to resolve the crisis among conflicting polarities, Ēchmiadzin, in 1934, dispatched Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian, the chairman of the Supreme Spiritual Council of Ēchmiadzin, as Plenipotentiary-at-large. The purpose of his visit was to heal the dissension and to promote solidarity in the Armenian Church in America. However, due to deep-rooted antagonism between rival groups, this anticipated peace did not prevail and his mission remained unfulfilled. The days of 1933 and thereafter were marked by intense suffering, burning hatred, and bitter, bloody feuds in which politics and religion seemed inextricably mixed. The division in the Church showed definite signs of permanency and left an irreparable mark on the Armenian community in America.

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[1] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 373.

A. Situation in Ēchmiadzin

During the period between 1933 and 1938 the U.S.S.R. achieved rapid industrialization and almost complete collectivization of agriculture. Politically and militarily the Russian experiment was impaired by Japanese aggression. Internally Soviet life was disturbed by the Great Purge of 1936-1938, which was a direct result of the social and political animosities of the previous years.[1]

A period of such vast importance was certain to have a far-reaching effect upon Armenia and consequently upon Ēchmiadzin. Legally the clergy were still disenfranchised, heavily burdened with taxes, and socially circumscribed. The ban on religious propaganda remained unchanged. Article 124 of the Stalin Constitution of 1936 stated:

> With the aim of securing freedom of conscience for the citizens, the church in the USSR is separated from the state and the school from the church. Freedom of celebrating religious cults and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens.[2]

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[1] During the Great Purge, the NKVD, under Stalin's general instructions, exterminated in all the republics of the Soviet Union the ambitious generals, Old Bolsheviks, "bourgeois nationalists" and dangerous ecclesiastical leaders who were suspected of collaborating with a foreign government to overthrow the Soviet regime.

[2] John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State 1917-1950 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), p. 273.

Until 1936 the climate was relatively tolerant of the Church. The reappraisal of the historic role of the Church and the recognition of the Church as a particularly useful institution to advance the cause of patriotism prompted the state to treat the Church and members less harshly. There was a decline in antireligious propaganda by many Communists and members of the League of Militant Godless. However, by 1936 the situation reversed itself. More antireligious propaganda against religious "prejudices" was encouraged, and again antireligious organizations resorted to rebuking religion. By 1937 charges that Armenian churches were engaged in hostile activity against the government grew steadily and more serious. According to an unconfirmed report the Soviet Secret Service in October of 1937 had arrested the Pontiff with twenty-four priests, all of whom would shortly appear on trial.[1]

Revival of hostility toward the ecclesiastics of the Armenian Church culminated in the premature death of Catholicos Khorēn I on the night of April 6, 1938, in the Catholicosal Palace at the Monastery of Echmiadzin.[2]

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[1] Editorial, "Madnelē Verch Bidi Hampourēn" ("Kiss after Betrayal"), *Baikar*, May 21, 1937; A. N. Nazar, "Ēchmiadzini Herhakirnerēn Hedoy" ("Following the Cablegrams of Echmiadzin") *Baikar*, June 1, 1937.

[2] Vahe Sarafian, "The Soviet and the Armenian Church," *Armenian Review*, VIII (Winter, 1955), 97; Matossian, p. 161; Kolarz, p. 156.

Allegedly, his death was perpetrated by the Secret Police officers of the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs). Walter Kolarz, a well-known journalist and authority on Soviet Affairs, commented upon the death of Catholicos Khorēn in the following words:

> The most charitable explanation is that he died because proper medical attention was denied to him, but there is good ground to believe that he was in fact assassinated by the Transcaucasian NKVD, of which Beriya was then in command.[1]

According to the testimony of Archbishop Nersēs Melik-T'ank'ian of Tabriz, Iran, Catholicos Khorēn was strangled in his Palace by a band of five NKVD Secret Service Police because he refused to surrender the treasures of the Church. His burial was carried out in great haste and secrecy, devoid of any of the solemnities usually afforded such a high-ranking churchman.[2]

As antireligious propaganda intensified in Armenia, religious services and practices were also sharply checked. The clergy were subject to a miserable and humiliated life. Monks were forbidden to leave their cloisters or to communiate with people. Police permission was necessary in order to travel to Ēchmiadzin.[1] The official publication of Ēchmiadzin, Ararat, was suspended in 1938. This renewed attack upon the Armenian Church was an integral part of the Soviet purges, especially the Great Purge of 1936-1938, which claimed the lives of millions. The Great Purge in Armenia was directed against Armenian nationalism.[2] Expulsion from the party, exile, arrest, and death were the order of the day. Widespread charges were brought against the victims of the Great Purge, prominent among these being nationalism. Strangely enough in Armenia the Great Purge was initiated by the killing of Aghasi Khanjian, a leader of second generation Bolsheviks, as opposed to the "Old Bolsheviks." He held the office of First Secretary of the K.P.A. from May 1930 to July 1936. It was rumored that Khanjian commited suicide because of a serious case of tuberculosis.[3]

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[1] Kolarz, p. 156.

[2] According to eye-witness reports given to Archbishop Melik-T'ankian, the body of Catholicos Khorēn was unceremoniously dumped out of a cathedral installation building by the assassins. His remains were buried in an unmarked grave by aged Armenian nuns. Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, p. 52.

Following the death of Khanjian, Armenian writers, artists, intellects, and scholars also became victims of the purge. They were charged with "Trotskyism and Nationalism." Among those put to death, imprisoned, or exiled to Siberian prison camps were Eghishē Ch'arents', Ak'sel Pagounts', Kourkēn Mahari, Vahan T'ot'vents', and Zabēl Esayian.[1]

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[1] K. Tzitzernak (pseud.), "Aghasi Khanchian," Armenian Review, III (Winter, 1950), 56.

[2] Editorial, "Nor Tserpagalout'iwnnere," ("The New Arrests"), Baikar, April 3, 1937.

[3] Tzitzernak, "Aghasi Khanchian," Armenian Review, III, pp. 58-59. Other emigré sources say that Khanjian was shot by Lavrentia Beria, first secretary of the Tanscaucasian Regional Committee, in Tiflis, Georgia, on July 9, 1936.

These political and religious developments in the homeland had a definite impact upon the Armenian Church and community in America. The Tashnag press became even more belligerent in its attacks upon the opposition, labelling them "Communists" or "Communist dupes." The anti-Tashnag factions charged the Tashnags with Nazism and Fascism.[2]

B. Panic and Fanaticism in Church and Community in America

The murder of Archbishop Tourian ushered an era of panic and fanaticism into the Armenian Church and community throughout the United States. Mass meetings and riots occurred frequently, not only in major cities such as Boston, New York and Chicago, but also in small towns where Armenians resided in relatively few numbers. The Armenian community was torn asunder as friend turned against friend, businesses were boycotted, husbands turned against wives, and parents and children became bitter foes. According to the Tashnag Party the Communists and their Rhamgavar collaborators were at fault for the catastrophic cleavage.[1] The opposition, in turn, held the Tashnag Party solely responsible for the strife which gripped and paralyzed the entire community. They claimed Tashnag ambition to dominate Armenian communities throughout the diaspora was a well-planned scheme, masterminded and executed by a forceful anti-Communist Tashnag leader, Vahan Nawasartian, editor of the Cairo newspaper, Housaper.[2]

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[1] A. Atan, "Hay Geank'" ("Armenian Life"), *Hairenik Amsakir*, XIV (October, 1936), 164-165; XV (November, 1936), 157-158.

[2] Editorial, "Noyn Hokepanout'ean Ergou Darper Ardahaydout'iwnnerě" ("Two Interpretations of the Same Spirit"), *Baikar*, April 23, 1937; Atamian, *The Armenian Community*, pp. 378-379.

Nawasartian's ideological convictions and political ambitions were directed toward the imminent downfall of the Kremlin. He lived with this obsession all his life. Perhaps this explains the almost pathological degree of hostility and psychological warfare he launched against the anti-Tashnag leaders. He proposed ideological dominance and infiltration of the Armenian Churches in the diaspora for the fulfillment of his political dreams. The Church was to be used as a vehicle in the crusade against Communism. The Church in America, particularly, was thought to be susceptible to such ideological attack. The Armenian Church in the diaspora, he felt, must become the weapon by which the Tashnag Party could fight its sworn enemy. Even Ēchmiadzin was not to be spared in this battle.[3]

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[1] Hairenik Weekly, August 24, 1934; Atamian, The Armenian Community, pp. 362-375.

[2] Antranig Zaroukian, "Spiwr'k'i Dasnameagnerě," ("The Decades of the Diaspora") Nayiri, February 1, 1970, p. 8.

[3] Ibid.

A close scrutiny of subsequent events mirrors the impact of this concept and also reveals how it molded and implemented the Tashnag theory of church domination in the diaspora, particularly in the Catholicosal election of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon, in 1956. Bishop Zareh P'ayaslian of Aleppo, Syria, a long-time sympathizer of the Tashnag Party, was elected Catholicos. Since that time the division in the Armenian Church has assumed worldwide proportions as a result of the continuing rift between the two major Armenian Church headquarters in Ēchmiadzin and in Cilicia. The dissident churches of America were given recognition by the See of Cilicia in 1956 and were organized under a separate Prelacy in New York, subject to the jurisdiction of the Cilician See.[1]

1. The Locum-Tenens: Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian (1933-1939)

Following the assassination of Archbishop Tourian, the Central Executive Committee met at the Diocesan headquarters on December 28, 1933, to take necessary measures for conducting the business of the Diocese. The first item on the agenda entailed the election of a Locum-Tenens or Vicar-General. Father Madt'ēos Hēk'imian of New York was nominated for the office but he declined. Thereupon Father Mamprē

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[1] Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, pp. 16-23.

Kalfaian of the Holy Cross Church in Union City, New Jersey, was unanimously elected as Locum-Tenens.[1] Ēchmiadzin was notified of the election, and an immediate confirmation followed on January 11, 1934.[2]

Father Kalfaian was born on February 12, 1893, in Smyrna, Turkey. His parents were wealthy, his father being the chief architect of the Smyrna municipality. Father Kalfaian's baptismal name was Aram. He received his elementary education at the local Armenian school and his secondary education at the French Freres Mariste School in Smyrna. In 1915, during the Armenian massacres and deportations, he escaped with his parents to Cairo, Egypt, where he secured employment in a French bank. It was largely due to the influence and insistence of his devout mother that Aram, now twenty-seven, entered the Armenian Seminary at Saint James Convent in Jerusalem.

In 1923 he was ordained a celibate priest and was assigned to a pastorate in Jaffa, Palestine. In 1925 he assumed the pastorate of the Armenian Church in Marseilles,

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn Amerigahay Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovnerou ("Minutes of the Diocesan Conventions of Armenians of America"), New York, April 16, 1939, p. 17

[2] "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean ("Official Announcement of the National Central Council"), The Gotchnag, January 27, 1934, p. 88.

France. Two years later, in 1927, he came to the United States and became the pastor of the Holy Cross Church in Union City, New Jersey. He remained in his pastorate until his election as Locum-Tenens in 1933.

From the outset and throughout his thirty-seven years of service to the Armenian Church, Archbishop Kalfaian remained a staunch and loyal supporter of Ēchmiadzin and the Pontiff. In the difficult years preceding the assassination of Archbishop Tourian he displayed unwavering loyalty to him. In the dark days following the assassination of the Archbishop, Archbishop Kalfaian again remained steadfast to the Diocese and Ēchmiadzin. In 1935 he was ordained as Bishop.

Archbishop Kalfaian remained in office as Locum-Tenens until March 1, 1939, at which time he resigned to assume the pastorate of Saint Leon's Church in Patterson, New Jersey. From 1942 to 1946 he served as Primate of the Western Diocese of California. In 1945 he was elevated to the rank of Archbishop by Kēork VI, Catholicos of All Armenians. From 1946 to 1954 Archbishop Kalfaian served as pastor of various parishes, both in the Eastern and Western Dioceses. In 1954 he was elected Primate of the Eastern Diocese. In 1958 he retired after serving one term. Archbishop Kalfaian died on July 17, 1960, in Miami, Florida, at the age of 67.

The Archbishop was known to his friends and parishoners as a kindly and generous man. He was essentially a humble person, although he loved beauty and elaborateness in liturgical services. It is told that during his Primacy in the Eastern Diocese a young priest complained to Archbishop Kalfaian that his assignment was beneath his dignity. The Archbishop replied that "that kind of deportment is hard for me to understand." He continued:

> What do you suppose I will do when I am through serving as Primate; will I fold my hands and do nothing because I happen to be an Archbishop? Of course not: I'll be willing to serve as a pastor in any parish.[1]

This was not a mere show of words for that was precisely what Archbishop Kalfaian had been doing at the time of his death, serving as temporary pastor of the small St. John's Church of Miami, Florida, as he had done in so many other parishes.

2. Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee

With the assassination of Archbishop Tourian, the New York police were confronted with a bizarre situation. An atrocious assassination had been conducted in broad daylight. One by one the alleged killers and their collaborators were apprehended by the police, but the solution to the murder was far from being realized. The suspects, nine members of the Tashnag Party, were Madt'ēos Leylēgian, Nshan Sarkisian, Osgan Erganian, Martin Mozian, Juan Gonzales Ch'alekian, Harry Sarafian, John Mirijanian, Mihran Zadigian, and

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[1] Editorial, "Archbishop Mampre Calfayan," Armenian Church, IV (September, 1961), p. 3.

Hovhannēs Antrēasian. A systematic interrogation of members of the congregation at the time of the assassination and of those affiliated with the Tashnag Party was conducted, but witnesses were reluctant to testify against the alleged assassins. Painstakingly the details of the homicide were described and pieces were put together. The date of the trial was set for June 7, 1934.

The Assistant District Attorney of the State of New York, Alexander Kaminsky, was appointed prosecutor. His associate was Assistant District Attorney Joseph Cohen. To assist these officials the Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee was organized on a voluntary basis on December 28, 1933, under the auspices of the Diocese.[1] Former Distict Attorney of the State of New York, Thomas Dewey, was engaged as legal counsellor for the Committee. The Committee undertook the organization of mass memorial meetings in major cities, the gathering of information relating to the crime, the rallying of witnesses, the collection of funds to defray the expenses of the trial, the publication of four booklets and a memorial book, and the release of periodic news items to the press. This committee remained in existence for fifteen months, from December 28, 1933,to March 7, 1935, at which time it was liquidated, having accomplished its tasks. The

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[1] Adonakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1936, pp. 17-19.

Committee collected $24,664.15.[1]

Several other committees of short duration came into existence following the murder, pledging to support the cause of justice against the apprehended criminals and also promoting anti-Tashnag propaganda. These groups often found themselves in discord with the Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee. Their differences proved detrimental to the case, often creating new obstacles for the authorities.

Some groups drove antagonism to the extreme in exploiting matters for their own gain. One such group was the United Front of Anti-Tashnags, supported by the Friends of the Soviet Union and the American Committee to Aid Soviet Armenia. This group organized rallies to decry Archbishop Tourian's assassination. The Armenian Progressive League and American Communist Party also supported this group.[2] The Tashnag press was adamant in its insistence that the United Front proposed to strike at the Tashnag Party by subjecting it to public indignation and demoralization. In their opinion, the United Front intended to accomplish these ends by picketing and boycotting Tashnag businesses, weakening the Tashnag sphere of influence, and by incriminating the Tashnag Party in public opinion, bringing about its ideological death.[1]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1936, p. 28

[2] Daily Worker, December 28, 1933, p. 6; Roy, pp. 409-410; Editorial, "Polshewignerou Ch'arashouk' Ěnt'ats'k'ě" ("The Evil Course of the Bolsheviks"), Hairenik, January 6, 1934.

However, the rallies conducted by the "United Front of Anti-Tashnags" hindered the meetings sponsored by the Diocese. The involvement of Communists gave cause for concern to those already suspicious to believe that Communists were attempting to gain pockets of influence in the Armenian Church. The United Front was also criticized by the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Rhamgavar Party), arch-rival of the Tashnags, which charged the United Front with extremism against the Tashnag Party which undermined the harmony and peace of Armenian communities.

The Rhamgavar Party deplored the activities of another group known as the "Friends of Soviet Armenia, Anti-Tashnag Popular Committee." The Rhamgavars reaffirmed their confidence and loyalty to the Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, labeling the Friends of Soviet Armenia as Communist agents. They urged their followers to oppose this latter group which they said was trying to monopolize a case that rightfully belonged to the Armenian people and Church.[2]

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[1] Editorial, "Miats'eal Jagadi Herosnerě" ("The Heroes of the United Front") *Hairenik*, January 21, 1934.

[2] "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn" ("Official Notice"), *Baikar*, March 9, 1934.

Furthermore, the Rhamgavar Party reasoned, Communist involvement would leave the impression that Archbishop Tourian had been an agent of the Communists.[1]

Several times the Diocese issued news releases in order to inform the public that it was not responsible for any action undertaken by any organizations not operating under the jurisdiction of the Diocese. The Diocese also stressed that those committees under its jurisdiction were to refrain from any joint campaigning with other committees outside its jurisdiction.[2] Rather than a lack of cooperation this was a matter, said the Diocese, of discretion to ensure that, through the proper course of action, justice would be brought to interested parties.[3]

Diocesan officials were distressed over the frequent rallies which were marked by hatred, rage, violence and, in some instances, bloodshed and death. Serious strife was reported between opposing Armenian groups in New York, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities throughout the United States. The Diocese saw these encounters as serving only to damage the Armenian community and its name. Entire communities were besieged by intolerance, antagonism, and ignorance, effecting an ever-widening chasm. Police intervention was frequent. Brother often betrayed brother as innocent and ignorant men alike were gripped by the fanaticism and frenzy which engulfed all.

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[1] Editorial, "Nertashnag Kordzounēout'iwn" ("Harmonious Collaboration"), The Gotchnag, February 10, 1934, p. 124.

[2] Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, "Bashdōnagan" ("Official Notice"), The Gotchnag, March 10, 1934, p. 232.

[3] Ibid.

As time passed, bitter strife and animosity increased to such an extent that the real tragedy of the death of the Primate seemed to be overshadowed by these tragic factional interests. The Armenian community was gripped by virtual civil war. Instead of exercising restraint, coolness, moderation, and wisdom, people were easily aroused and slanderous remarks were commonplace. Cries such as "Assassins! Murderers! Internal Evil! Boycott! Anathema! Pro-Soviet! Anti-Soviet! Pro-Nazi! Schism in the Church!" became part of the popular vocabulary of the day.[1]

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[1] The reader is invited to consult the following editorials and articles on this subject in the Armenian press of opposing parties. The following issues of *Baikar* are worth considering for the non-Tashnag argument: "H. H. T. Amerigay Getronagan Gomidēi Bashōnagan Haydararout'iwnĕ" ("The Official Notice of the Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation"), *Baikar*, January 3, 1934; "Tashnagts'out'iwnĕ Hay Zhoghovourtin Arhchew" ("A Case for the Armenian People") *Baikar*, January 7, 1934; "Zhoghovrtayin Zayroyt'in Arch'ew" ("An Infuriated People"), *Baikar*, January 19, 1934; "Harg ē Achagts'il Tourian Hantsnakhoumpin" ("It is Well to Cooperate with the Tourian Committee"), *Baikar*, January 24, 1934; "Zhoghovrtayin Ts'asoumēn Sahmrhgadz" ("An Outraged Populace") *Baikar*, February 11, 1934. The following issues of the *Hairenik* offer the Tashnag thesis. "Arteōk' Gĕ Khorhin T'ē Our Gĕ Danin Ays Kaghoutĕ" ("Are They Aware of Where They are Leading the Community"), *Hairenik*, January, 1934; "Akhdawor Park'ern ou Miatseal Jagadĕ" ("Contagious Values and the United Front"), *Hairenik*, January 11, 1934; "Hagatashnagts'agan Bayk'ari Dzrakirn ou Poun Nbadagĕ" ("The Plan and True Purpose Behind Anti-Tashnag Propaganda"), *Hairenik*, January 31, 1934.

C. The Institutionalization of the Division of the Church

As the civil war within the Armenian community expanded, the Tashnag element rebelled against the Mother See of Ēchmiadzin. It became apparent that this rebellious attitude of the Tashnag Party would produce dissension. The non-Tashnag element was equally uncompromising in its policy toward its opponents. Because the destiny of the Church was so closely allied with that of the political factions, it was inevitable that the Diocese witnessed a new era of internecine strife.

Ēchmiadzin solicited unity and attempted to prevent further separatist movements in this latest ecclesiastical storm in the American Diocese. Because of their position, Ēchmiadzin and the Pontiff were accused by Tashnag adherents of failing to provide spiritual leadership and failing to display impartiality in their relations with the church communities of the United States.[1]

On December 28, 1933, Father Mamprē Kalfaian was elected as the new Locum-Tenens by the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese. At this meeting the Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee was formed to assist government authorities in the forthcoming trial of the assassins. Father Kalfaian's election was reaffirmed by Ēchmiadzin by an official letter issued on January 18, 1934, and signed by the Chairman of the Supreme Spiritual Council of the Holy See, Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian.[1] The letter instructed the faithful and clergy to refrain from taking sides in the quarrels that were rampant in the communities and to pledge obedience and loyalty to the newly elected Locum-Tenens. The letter continued to urge that the faithful show cooperation with the Central Executive Committee in carrying out its duties and that they cease any activities which may prove detrimental to the unity of the Church. The clergy especially were urged to display loyalty to Ēchmiadzin in order to decrease any possibilities of dissension.[2]

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[1] "Ēchmiadzni Nor Hrahanknerě" ("The New Ordinances of Ēchmiadzin"), Hairenik, January 7, 1934.

With nationalist passions remaining high, the Tashnag Party challenged and downgraded the reconciliatory efforts of the Holy See. Their animosity toward Bolshevism led them to believe the Bolsheviks to be the real perpetrators of the schism, the Pontiff being seen as a captive under their aegis. According to the Tashnag press, Bolshevism

> ... the evil which is now formally established in Armenia, for many years now has been making organized attempts to subject the Armenians abroad to its arbitrary rule and exploitations, is using all its efforts to destroy all our organizations that aim to

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[1] "Arhachnortaran Hayotz Amerigayi" ("Diocese of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, March 10, 1934, p. 232.

[2] Ibid.

> pressure our national spirit and ideals, and is anxious to use the Armenian Churches abroad as mere tools with which to carry out its dark schemes.[1]

The Tashnags denounced the jurisdictional authority and leadership of the Catholicos on the following points:

(1) As long as Ēchmiadzin is not free and protected against the direct or indirect pressure and exploitation of the Soviet tyranny, the nationalist Armenians will continue to see looming over Ēchmiadzin the shadow of the Evil - that is the enemy of all creeds and churches, and also the enemy of our national ideals.

(2) As long as the center of the Armenian Church, Ēchmiadzin, continues to remain in the clutches of the "cheka", the personifier of the Evil, Armenian nationalism cannot and will not allow this evil, that is utilizing the authority of Ēchmiadzin to use the Armenian Churches abroad as weapons with which to agitate and enervate the Armenians abroad and to bury forever the Armenian Cause.[2]

Thus it became clear that in Tashnag policy political controversies took precedence over ecclesiastical matters. The voice of the Catholicos in the name of true Christian love, brotherhood, peace, national unity, and understanding went unheeded by warring groups. Instead, the churches in America became cradles for hatred, dissension, and hostility. The situation deteriorated when several clergymen, in open defiance of the Holy See, cast their lot with the Tashnag faction and severed their ties with Ēchmiadzin. These clerics were unanimously supported by the schismatic Central Executive Committee which pleaded with the Catholicos to be recognized as the lawful and official ecclesiastical body.

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[1] Editorial, "Our Gě Kdnoui Ch'arik'ĕ" ("Wherein Lies the Real Evil?"), Hairenik, February 20, 1934.

[2] Ibid.

The Tashnags declared that "the Supreme Spiritual Council of Ēchmiadzin is aware of the fact that today in America there exist two rival Central Executive Committees, each with its own churches, officials, and priests."[1] The defected priests and the Tashnag-oriented Central Executive Committee displayed great disrespect and indignation toward Father Kalfaian. The Tashnags opposed his administration from the outset. Father Kalfaian was often abused and vilified by his adversaries. The Tashnag press urged the rebellious priests and parishoners to ignore his instructions and to refuse him loyalty. The following is indicative of the tone of their rebuke.

> Even those with but a rudimentary knowledge of politics can understand that Ēchmiadzin, by enforcing these arrogant and unjust orders, will not force the majority of the Armenians of America to yield to the authority of Father Mamprē Kalfaian.[2]

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[1] Editorial, "Ēchmiadzni Nor Hrahankě" ("The New Edict of Ēchmiadzin"), Hairenik, March 8, 1934.

[2] Ibid.

The efforts of the Tashnag Party deepened the breech and the chaotic situation within the Diocese and Armenian Church. The Party was even more determined to prolong the dissension as long as it viewed the Communists as solely responsible for the state of affairs in the Church, pressuring the Catholicos and using his office to influence the Armenian communities and churches the world over. The following manifesto clearly outlines the scope of their separatist tendencies:

> Even the most naive have witnessed that Ēchmiadzin, under pressure from the Cheka, is forced to take sides rather than remain aloof. Under guise of impartiality she attempts to restore complete unity to the Church.
>
> As long as no means are found and as long as the feuding parties have not established communications, it is natural that the Central Executive Committee of the majority of the Armenians will be forced to maintain its independent existence with its loyal Trustees and priests and will not yield to Father Kalfaian and the Central Executive Committee who represent the minority of the Armenians.
>
> Under these conditions the Central Executive Committee of the majority has but one course to pursue--to remain independent with the anticipation that the minority group will wisely consider reaching an agreement with the majority to restore the unity of the Church. Without this, no tranquility can prevail in this storm-wrecked community.[1]

It becomes apparent then that the manifesto gave all signs of institutionalizing the split within the community by prolonging the internecine strife of the Church and denouncing the spiritual jurisdiction of the Catholicos over the American Diocese. On May 23, 1934, ten clergymen issued a manifesto addressed to the Catholicos in which they objected to his partiality in settling Diocesan disputes.[1] The ten clergymen were Fathers Ghewont Martougēsian, Nshan P'ap'azian, Mesrob Dēr Hovhannēsian, Bsag Sarkisian, Madt'ēos Manigian, Housig Nakhnik'ian, At'ig Dzots'igian, Eghishē Kasbarian, Bedros Mamprēian and Movsēs Dēr Sdep'anian. The non-Tashnag press charged these priests with being the same political cloth as their Tashnag masters. In the manifesto the clergymen stated that, despite their respect for the authority and office of the Catholicos, they could not tolerate Father Kalfaian as the head of the Diocese nor the Central Executive Committee as the legal authority in power. Their protest to the Catholicos included the following remark:

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[1] Editorial, "Inch' Ĕnel" ("What to Do"), Hairenik, March 16, 1934.

> It is deeply regrettable to witness that the Supreme Spiritual Council, instead of dissolving the disagreements which are dividing our communities, is ordering us to be subject to officials such as Father Mamprē Kalfaian and the Central Executive Committee which pursues a course detrimental to justice of the Church and which enhances division among the people.[2]

On June 11 and 12 the Locum-Tenens and the Central Executive Committee notified the Catholicos of the illegal activities of these clerics and requested that immediate action be taken against them. The Holy Synod of Ēchmiadzin responded by defrocking Father Martougēsian and Father P'ap'azian and suspending the other eight from their priestly duties until further notification from the Pontiff.[1]

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[1] "Amerigahay Egeghats'agannerou Poghok'ĕ Vehap'arh Hayrabedin" ("The Complaint of the Armenian Clergy of America to the Pontiff"), Hairenik, June 13, 1934.

[2] *Ibid.*

During this crisis, one church, Saint Illuminator Church in New York City, supported the dissident group. In subsequent years, two other churches, Saint Stephen's Church in New Britain, Connecticut (1938), and Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, were given to the dissidents by court order.

Troubled days and years lay ahead as protests and pleas were raised on both sides. Clergy and laity alike contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Diocese. Church regulations and Catholicosal summonses were either accepted or ignored. Priests were appointed and dismissed at will by Church Trustees. As the dissension within the Armenian Church spread across the country, secession movements came to the fore in various cities. Litigation over church property developed as factions in one community after another took their claims to the courts. The Tashnag Party accused the Catholicos and the Supreme Council at Ēchmiadzin of being usurpers and of meddling in the administration of lawfully operating churches. The Holy See, however, exercised its prerogatives as the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the Armenian Church and declared the dissenting clergymen and their supporters *in schisma*. All indications pointed to imminent plans for an independent church organization. This was to be the ultimate blow to the Armenian Church and the most serious aspect of ecclesiastical anarchy.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1936, pp.14-16.

D. The Trial of the Nine

The nine persons apprehended by the police for the killing of the Primate were all members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag Party). Their trial was scheduled to begin on June 7, 1934, at the Court of General Sessions in New York.[1] Two of the nine received death sentences which later were commuted to life imprisonment by Governor Herbert Lehman of New York. These convicted persons were Madt'ēos Lēylēgian and Nshan Sarkisian. The sentences of the remaining seven ranged from ten years to life imprisonment.

The following pages present a summary of their dramatic and sensational trial. In the words of Assistant District Attorney Alexander H. Kaminsky, "... never in the history of New York has there been a crime so unique."[2] To Armenians the assassination of Archbishop Tourian was an ecclesiastical and national tragedy, and to many it signified the end of the Armenian Church in America.

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[1] Derounian, "The Assassination," *Real Detective*, p. 90; Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee, *Azkataw Eghernĕ Ew Tadabardout'iwnĕ*, p. 95.

[2] Derounian, "The Assassination", *Real Detective*, p. 91.

1. Pre-Trial Investigations

Within minutes of the assassination Dr. Thomas Gonzales, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner for New York City, arrived at Holy Cross Church with Assistant Chief John J. Sullivan and Inspector Francis J. Kear, Chief of the Manhattan Detective Bureau. The doctor pronounced the Archbishop dead. "There is nothing more I can do here... It is a murderous attack, and there was no hope for the Archbishop, after he was struck," he said. Dr. Gonzales then ordered the body of the Archbishop placed in a police car and taken to the morgue at Bellevue Hospital for an autopsy.[1] The two apprehended suspects, Madt'ēos Lēylēgian and Nshan Sarkisian, along with as many witnesses as could be crowded into another vehicle, were driven to the 34th Precinct Wadsworth Avenue Police Station for questioning. Participating in the interrogation were four detectives and Joseph Cohen, Assistant District Attorney for New York City, who had been placed in charge of the investigation by District Attorney William Copeland Dodge of New York.[2]

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[1] Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," The Master Detective, July, 1935, pp. 11, 66.

[2] Ibid., p. 12

The prime concern of the investigators from the outset was to determine whether or not the murder of the Archbishop had been premeditated or was the spontaneous result of religious frenzy by those antagonistic to the Primate. The investigators felt that "it seemed that the whole affair was a carefully arranged plot."[1] If this were the case, however, there were many questions which had to be answered. If the killing were the result of a carefully planned and executed plot, why had the assailants chosen so public a place as a church during services and in broad daylight? The only explanation the interrogators could offer was the fanatical nature of the men involved. Assistant District Attorney Kaminsky concluded:

> They not only wanted to remove the Archbishop from his position of power over the congregation, but they also wanted to do it in a way spectacular enough to impress their opponents with their power and daring; and squelch all opposition to their purposes for all time. This must have seemed more important to them than the lives of the perpetrators, a possible conclusion among those carried to extraordinary lengths by fanatical religious or political figures.[2]

The investigators made an exhaustive study of the political and religious turmoil that had beset the Armenians from the fourteenth century onward. What the police learned from their inquiries into the politico-religious history that preceded the assassination "... was a record of intense suffering, burning hate and bitter and bloody feuds, in which politics and religion seemed inextricably mixed."[1] Kaminsky concluded: "And now the feverish intensity that underlay the religious struggle had been transported to our shores from the Near East, to develop into a terrifying and bloody climax."[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 12.

[2] Ibid., p. 13.

The solution to the case remained at a standstill despite the overwhelming number of witnesses. The witnesses presented a wall of paralyzing silence. Some appeared in court; others stayed home and feigned illness. Still others claimed ignorance of English. Avedis Derounian, a columnist who attended the trial, reports that "widespread was the dread that the insidious hand which had felled the Archbishop would strike on any who dared testify against those seen to perpetrate the loathsome murder."[3] Of the hundreds of witnesses who were questioned, none could supply the detectives with a direct statement that he had seen the murder committed. The police concluded that "either these Armenians wished to settle the feuds in their own way by murderous counterplots; or they were too much in fear for their own safety to disclose what they knew."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

[2] Ibid., p. 15.

[3] Derounian, "The Assassination," Real Detective, p. 89.

[4] Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," The Master Detective, July, 1935, p. 65.

The detectives, unsuccessful in their attempts to induce the witnesses to talk, halted the investigation but requested that all witnesses be at the Holy Cross Church the next day. The members of the congregation were also summoned and requested to occupy the same seats as on December 24. On Monday, December 25, the detectives restaged the events leading up to the slaying, hoping this would enable witnesses to recall happenings they had forgotten. Captain John Lagarene and Vincent Tarese conducted the questioning with the assistance of an interpreter, Bedros Isgendērian, an Armenian patrolman from the Coney Island Precinct in Brooklyn.[1] In place of the actual defendants pictures of the five prisoners were used--Madt'ēos Lēylēgian, Nshan Sarkisian, Osgan Erganian, Martin Mozian, and Juan Gonzales Ch'alikian.

Following the investigation in the church, a systematic interrogation of 620 persons was undertaken and their statements carefully tabulated. The detectives went to all means to gather information, traveling as far as Philadelphia, Boston, and Providence to visit Tashnag headquarters.[2] Because the Tashnags were under suspicion, orders were issued to the Fifth Detective Squad to raid Tashnag headquarters at the Armen Garo Club on 3rd Avenue in New York City and obtain the membership roster and list of members present at the "tea party" held on December 22, two days before the assassination. Some 150 Tashnag card bearing members had attended this function, including all the defendants except Zadigian.[1]

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[1] Derounian, "The Assassination," Real Detective, p. 89.

[2] "Sbanout'ean Tawatirnerĕ Gĕ P'ndrhouin Bost'ōni Mēch," ("The Conspirators of the Assassination Are Being Sought in Boston"), Baikar, January 4, 1934.

The uniqueness of this case aroused intense interest throughout the country as newspapers devoted considerable space to the murder and the motivation that prompted it. The Armenian press was particularly outspoken in its interpretations of the assassination. Some demanded immediate punishment of the Tashnags as the instigators of the plot.[2] The Hairenik was just as vehement in its demands that the Tashnags be vindicated by giving the prisoners a fair and speedy trial. An official declaration issued on December 28, 1933, by the Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation denied Tashnag involvement in the assassination and exhorted its followers to show self-control in those critical moments.[3]

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[1] Derounian, "The Assassination," Real Detective, p. 90; Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," The Master Detective, July, 1935, p. 65.

[2] Editorial, "Ōrouan Tadě Azkayin Ē" ("Today's Case is National"), The Gotchnag, January 27, 1934, p. 75; Editorial, "Baderazmě Azkin Tēm"("The War against the Nation"), The Gotchnag, February 3, 1934, p. 99.

[3] "Basdhōnagan Haydararout'iwn" ("Official Notice of the Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation"), Hairenik, December 29, 1933; Editorial, "Niw Eork'i Ojirě" ("The New York Murder"), Hairenik, December 29, 1933.

The Tashnag community at large refused to believe the murder was committed by their comrades. They insisted that a "Mr. X," who had disappeared from the church, was the real assassin planted by the Communists themselves.[1] This was also the contention of the defense attorney, Joab H. Banton, former District Attorney of New York City. He issued a statement suggesting that the Bolsheviks were responsible for the murder and the outrage as a means by which to discredit the Tashnags.[2] The Bolsheviks did not hesitate to inflame antagonism and passions within Armenian communities as the Bolshevik Panvor indicated:

> The Tourian murder is a godsend from heaven. Even if the Tashnags did not murder the Archbishop, they should have murdered him. His murder must be pinned on them at all cost, because now we have a good excuse to smash the Tashnags.[3]

Throughout the country rallies, memorial services, and demonstrations were held during the time the nine prisoners were being arraigned in homicide court. Angry mobs lined the streets outside the courthouse, hissing at the prisoners as they walked by. Rival factions attacked each other with ice picks and knives and each accused the other of the murder of the Archbishop. "Death to All Murderers!" "Death to All

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[1] Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 372.

[2] "Bashdban P'asdapani Haydararout'iwnnerě" ("The Declarations of the Defense Attorney"), Hairenik, December 30, 1933.

[3] Hairenik Weekly, October 13, 1943.

Tashnags!" read the banners of the mobs that paraded outside the courthouse while the men suspected of the Archbishop's murder appeared before the Grand Jury.[1]

With nine of the men in custody, it became easier to get witnesses to talk. Some came voluntarily to the District Attorney's Office to tell what they knew. One star witness was Garabed Zadigian, who volunteered a startling piece of information to the District Attorney. Just before the murder he said he had seen a length of gleaming steel in the hand of Madt'ēos Lēylēgian. He had not revealed this before, he said, because he had been afraid of reprisal.[2]

The District Attorney's Office now felt that, notwithstanding the possibility of missing "Mr. X", it could go to trial with the other nine conspirators and have a well-knit case.

2. Trial and Verdict

The trial opened at the Court of General Sessions in New York on June 7, 1934, with Judge Joseph E. Corrigan presiding. It lasted until July 14, 1934.[3] The Trial was stormy and was marked by heated clashes between attorneys. Persons from all walks of life attended the trial, and it was obvious that throughout the sessions hatred against the Tashnags was indeed intense.

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[1] "Pandargealner Tartseal Tadaran Gě Darouin" ("The Prisoners Are Again Escorted to Court"), *Baikar*, January 12, 1934; "Zhoghovourtin Zayroyt'ě Ch'ihantardir" ("The Anger of the People Does Not Subside"), *Baikar*, January 18, 1934.

[2] Kaminsky, p. 70; Derounian, p. 90.

[3] "Niw Eork'i Tadavarout'iwně Gě Sgsi" ("The New York Trial Beings"), *Baikar*, June 8, 1934; "Niw Eork'i Tadavarout'iwně Sgsadz" ("The Trial Has Begun"), *Hairenik*, June 9, 1934.

The jury was comprised of twelve members, all non-Armenian. The Defense Counsels were former Senator Thomas I. Sheridan and former District Attorney Joab H. Banton.

The nine accused conspirators were Madt'ēos Lēylēgian, alleged to have rushed at the mid-section of the Archbishop with a double-edged butcher knife; Nshan Sarkisian, who had been seen to pin the arms of the Archbishop while Lēylēgian struck the fatal blows; Osgan Yerganian, who had been seen to knock the mitre off the Archbishop; Martin Mozian, seen getting on a pew to attack the Archbishop; Juan Gonzales Chalikian, seen pouncing on the Archbishop from the rear; Mihran Zadigian, seen standing on a pew, holding the Archbishop; and Ohannēs Antrēasian, who, witnesses testified, had taken the part of ringleader.[1] A tenth member of the alleged conspirators, who also belonged to the Tashnag Party, was never apprehended and was referred to as "Mr. X." More than 120 witnesses were subpoenaed, of which the state made use of forty-two. The defense presented thirty-five witnesses.[2]

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[1] "Nahadag Arhachnortin Sbanout'ean Tadĕ" ("The Trial of the Martyred Primate"), Baikar, June 13, 1934; "Tadavarout'ean Ĕnt'atsk'ĕ" ("The Course of the Trial"), The Gotchnag, June 16, 1934, p. 569.

[2] Derounian, "The Assassination," Real Detective, p. 90.

The trial re-opened on June 11. Difficulties were encountered from the very beginning. Vahan Kardashian, one of the defense counsels, was taken seriously ill, and Senator Sheridan asked for an adjournment until October.[1] "If your Honor denies this motion," he said, "Mr. Banton and I will withdraw from the case." Judge Joseph E. Corrigan denied the motion, however, adding that, if Defense Counsel withdrew, he would appoint them to the case as officers of the court.[2]

The prosecution traced the Christmas killing to the incidents which originated with the World's Fair in Chicago on June 1, 1933. Based on the facts he had disclosed, the District Attorney was convinced there had been a plot on the part of the Tashnag organization which had opposed the Archbishop and was determined to punish him.[3] Defense Counsel Thomas I. Sheridan vigorously attempted to prove that there were no grounds for premeditation and that the defendants were innocent of any crime.

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[1] "Niw Eork'i Tadavarout'iwnĕ Sgsadz", Hairenik, June 9, 1934. Vahan Kardashian, one of the defense counsels passed away on the same evening at 8:30 p.m. "Vahan Kardashian Merhadz" ("Vahan Kardashian Died"), Hairenik, June 13, 1934.

[2] Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," The Master Detective, July, 1935, p. 90; "Niw Eork'i Tadavarut'iwnĕ," Hairenik, June 9, 1934.

[3] This information is obtained from an eight page typed document entitled "Charge to Jury" by Judge Joseph E. Corrigan, delivered on July 13, 1934, just before the jury retired to cast their verdict upon the nine accused of the murder.

> This murder may have been committed by a religious fanatic, by a Soviet agent, or for hundreds of reasons. No one really knows who killed the Archbishop.[1]

In the ensuing weeks of the trial, the Armenian community in New York, divided by factional loyalties, displayed less than desirable behavior by demonstrating around the courthouse and creating disturbances. In other major cities rioting and demonstrations continued, diminishing all hopes for reconciliation among compatriots.

Inside the courtroom the trial proceeded. Periodic excitement was generated by the appearance of new witnesses and their startling disclosures. Fourteen witnesses connected Lēylēgian with the crime; five connected Sarkisian. Lesser charges were entered against the remaining seven.[2] Garabed Zadigian and Sarkis Dēmirjian were the principal witnesses at the trial. They disclosed that they had actually seen the flash of steel in the hand of Madt'ēos Lēylēgian.[3]

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[1] "Tourian Ark'ebisgobosi Sbanout'eamp Ampasdanouadz 9 Tashnagts'agannerou Tadavarout'iwne Niw Eork'i Mēch" ("The Trial of the Nine Tashnagts'agans Accused of the Murder of Archbishop Tourian in New York"), Hairenik, June 13, 1934.

[2] "Aganades S. Dēmirjiani Vgayout'iwne" ("Eyewitness Testimony of S. Demirjian"), Baikar, June 13, 1934; "Tourian Srpazani Sbanout'ean Tadĕ" ("The Trial of the Murdered Bishop Tourian"), The Gotchnag, June 23, 1934, p. 592.

[3] "Tadavarout'ean Amp'op'oumĕ" ("The Summary of the Trial"), Baikar, June 26, 1934.

On June 25 Defense Counsel Sheridan demanded that a mistrial be declared because, on two separate occasions, two jurors had entered the judge's chambers. It was explained by Judge Corrigan that the two jurors had received death threats; first, the foreman of the jury, William S. Schillinger, and second, Harry H. Fiedler. Defense Counsel Sheridan examined the threats which were written on postcards, postmarked New York, and signed with a "T." He then requested that the two jurors be dismissed and a mistrial be declared. Sheridan was of the opinion that these were the product of "an Eastern mentality," the initial "T" leaving the impression that the cards were sent by the Tashnags.

> We do not know who has sent these letters. It is probable that it is again the Eastern mind which is attempting to shift the blame to the Tashnags or is trying to make it appear that they are written by the Tashnags. I don't know.[1]

Judge Corrigan declined the defense's motion for a mistrial after ruling that the two threatening notes would not in any way influence the decision of the jurors. The trial proceeded.

Each defendant took the stand in his own behalf and denied the crime. Each did admit, however, that he was a member of the Tashnag Party, and further emphasized that he was "proud of it." The prosecution referred to the defendants as political and religious fanatics.

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[1] "Tourian Srpazani Sbanout'ean Tadě," The Gotchnag, July 21, 1934, p. 687.

On July 11 Thomas I. Sheridan presented his summation for the defense. His presentation lasted approximately one and one-half hours.[1] The major points of his case emphasized that this was indeed an unusual case. He considered the testimony of star witness Garabed Zadigian doubtful and depicted Lēylēgian as a victim of circumstances. Sheridan wanted to show that, more than anything else, religious fanaticism was at work in the crime, stemming from an Eastern mind and psychology.[2] The defense then proceeded to rebuke the notion that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was entirely dedicated to terrorism and that the crime was plotted and executed by that party. Turning to the jury, Sheridan concluded that, from the outset, a mood of hate had prevailed in the case--hate against not only the nine men but against the Tashnagts'out'iwn in general. His remarks ended with the following words:

> ... I ask that you acquit these men, because if there was a reasonable doubt of guilt, there is a doubt in this case. Well you know that this case was reeking with perjury... Could anyone tell all that happened, all they saw in that short time, at that rate of speed?

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[1] Thomas I. Sheridan, "Summation of the Defense", July 11, 1934. This document was provided through the courtesy of Attorney Dickran Boyajian who was an eyewitness reporter during the trial. The text is of eight pages in length, double-spaced, and presents a summary of the defense rather than the full text.

[2] *Ibid.*; "Tourian Srpazani Sbanout'ean Tadě" ("The Trial of the Murdered Bishop Tourian"), *The Gotchnag*, July 21, 1934, p. 686.

> These people, some of them, have perjured themselves, to aid in the conviction of these nine men. Apikian expressed the truth when he said that it was all in a 'mood of hate.' I thank you.[1]

On July 12 the prosecution presented its summation in a delivery lasting four hours. Kaminsky described the nine defendants as zealots, extremists, and fanatics who were responsible for the murder of the Archbishop according to a previously worked-out plan.[2] Prosecutor Kaminsky was poignant in his charges against the conspirators.

> These men are exhibitionists. They want to teach the world a lesson. It does not profit them to kill ordinary persons. They kill an Archbishop. In that killing they protest to the world. They want to teach the world that the Archbishop should not oppose what they think is right.[3]

Kaminsky emphatically involved the Tashnag Party in the murder because the defendants, as full-pledged members of this organization, aimed to further and fulfill the cause and aim of the party.[4] Based on all testimony heard, the prosecutor pointed out Lēylēgian as the killer of the Archbishop and went on to show that he had a clear-cut case against each of the nine. He climaxed his discussion in the following words:

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[1] Sheridan, "Summation of the Defense," July 11, 1934, p.8.

[2] Alexander H. Kaminsky, "Summation for the State," July 12, 1934, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., p. 4. The reference is to the incidents in which the Archbishop was assaulted several times by the Tashnags.

[4] "Tourian Srpazani Sbanout'ean Tadě," The Gotchnag, July 21, 1934, pp. 687-688.

> I ask no vengeance. I ask no wholesale convictions. All I ask from you is the fulfillment of the oath you gave when you took your seat. To do justice. A crime has been committed. To my mind it has been proven that each one individually participated in the crime. I have labored in this case. You have been very patient. I leave you with this last word. Abide by it. Be true to your oath. Do your duty fearlessly, so that Justice may prevail.[1]

On July 13, the thirty-seventh day of the trial, at 6:45 in the evening, Judge Joseph E. Corrigan addressed himself to the jurymen and stressed the importance of the case, both from the point of view of the defendants and the state. He explained at length the meaning of terms such as homicide, manslaughter, and credibility of witnesses. He summed up his deliberations by explaining the four degrees of murder on which the jurors were to base their decisions.

> First, murder in the first degree, wherein there is premeditation and deliberation on the crime to be committed, with an intent to kill. Second, murder in the second degree, where there is the intent to kill, but no premeditation. Third, manslaughter in the first degree, wherein there is no intent to kill, but there is the presence of a dangerous weapon. And, fourth, manslaughter in the second degree, wherein there is no intent to kill and no weapon.[2]

The jury reached a verdict at 1:25 the next morning, July 14, 1934, under highly dramatic circumstances. The defendants were brought into court and listened intently to the fate the jury had decided for them. William S.

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[1] Kaminsky, "Summation for the State," July 12, 1934, p. 19.

[2] Joseph E. Corrigan, "Charges to Jury," July 13, 1934, p. 8.

Schillinger, foreman of the jury, read the verdict. "We find Madt'ēos Lēylēgian and Nshan Sarkisian guilty as charged in the indictment. The other seven are guilty of manslaughter in the first degree."[1] As he finished reading, the nine stolidly maintained their ground with a coolness that had been characteristic of them throughout the trial.

On July 24, Judge Corrigan imposed the death sentence by electric chair at Sing Sing on Lēylēgian and Sarkisian, both guilty of murder in the first degree. He ordered sentences for the remaining seven ranging from ten to twenty years of imprisonment. The decision held that "the defendants, acting in concert, had conspired to kill the Archbishop." The electrocutions were scheduled for September 3, 1934, in order that the defense would have time to appeal to the Court of Appeals.[2]

On the evening of July 24, the Attorney General of New York, William Copeland Dodge, broadcast by radio to the public,speaking on the decision of the court. His speech was entitled, "The Human Side of the Law." The Attorney General concluded that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was opposed to the Soviet Union, hence its antagonism to the Archbishop who was friendly to Soviet Armenia. This fact, he continued, triggered the defendants to kill the Primate in the Church. His speech dealt with three major themes.

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[1] Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," *The Master Detective*, July, 1935, p. 70; Derounian,"The Assassination," *Real Detective*, p. 91; Editorial, "Artarout'ean Haght'anagĕ" ("The Victory of Justice"), *The Gotchnag*, July 21, 1934, p.675.

[2] "Ojrakordznerou Tadavjirhĕ" ("The Sentence of the Criminals"), *The Gotchnag*, July 28, 1934.

> First, Archbishop Ghewont Tourian is a victim of political revenge. Second, that foreign born communities of America should not transport from their lands to these shores the feuds of their native land. Third, that in America freedom of thought is tolerated, but the crime committed in the name of an ideology is punishable.[1]

This speech contained a lesson that whoever came to these shores from foreign lands must respect the institutions of the country of their adoption by observance of the laws of that nation.

On September 24, 1934, an official appeal was made by the Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation to individual chapters of the organization to initiate campaigns and mobilize all members for fund-raising purposes to aid the prisoners. Voluntary contributions poured in to meet the expenses of the trial and to aid the families of the defendants.[2] The non-Tashnag masses, on the other hand, in similar mass campaigns used the opportunity to the fullest to charge Tashnag leadership with political extremism and terrorism in order to achieve its objectives.

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[1] Editorial, "Entahanour Tadakhaz Doji Jarhě" ("The Speech of Attorney General Dodge"), The Gotchnag, August 4, 1934, p. 723.

[2] H. H. T. Amerigayi Getronagan Gomidē, "Goch' Azkaynagan Hayout'ean" ("Appeal to the Nationalistic Armenians"), Hairenik, September 26, 1934.

The defense counsel immediately filed notice of appeal and on August 24, 1934, the death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment.[1] On February 26, 1935, the Court of Appeals in Albany rejected the motion and ordered the execution of the verdict against the defendants.[2] On March 26, 1935, the state Supreme Court upheld the verdict of Judge Corrigan's court, and the date of the execution was set for April 11, 1935.

However, on April 9, 1935, Governor Herbert H. Lehman commuted the death sentences of Lēylēgian and Sarkisian to life imprisonment. They were within seventy-two hours of their scheduled march to the death chair when the commutation order arrived. "I am commuting the sentences of Lēylēgian and Sarkisian on account of the most unusual circumstances of this case," said Governor Lehman in issuing the order.[3]

The terrible and unholy crime committed in the name of political differences was indeed a source of national embarrassment for the majority of Armenians. The partisan presses, already divided, once again took issue with one another over the verdict. The Tashnags bore the burden of public anathema after the decision was handed down on July 14. One predictable reaction was denial of any guilt on the part of the defendants.

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[1] "9 Engernerou Tadavjiri Verakunnout'ean Ĕntats'k'ĕ," ("The Outcome of the Verdict of the 9 Comrades"), Hairenik, August 24, 1934.

[2] "Verak'nnich' Adeanĕ Gĕ Hasdadē Lēylēgiani Ew Sarkisiani Mahabadiji Vjirhĕ" ("The Court of Appeals Reaffirms the Death Sentence of Lēylēgian and Sarkisian"), The Gotchnag, March 9, 1935, p. 232.

[3] Kaminsky, "The Murder of the Archbishop," The Master Detective, July, 1935, p. 70.

As the defendants themselves proclaimed their innocence, the Tashnagts'out'iwn also officially announced that it had no part in the crime. They even contested the court proceedings and claimed bias on the part of the prosecuting attorneys and the court in general.[1] The Tashnag Party further criticized the District Attorney, saying he had no direct evidence and that his circumstantial evidence rested on assumptions, prejudicial testimony, and unsupported assertions. They blamed the Communists for the tragic cleavage. The Hairenik Weekly commented as follows:

> The social and economic boycott launched by one part of the Armenian community in this country against the other, the disruption of the unity of our people, the split in our church, the hectic efforts on the part of certain Armenian organizations to convict nine innocent Armenians who were recently sentenced by the New York Court, all constitute a part of the same Communist scheme, to destroy the institutions of this country, making certain gullible Armenians their instruments.[2]

Upon the occasion of the forty-first Representative Convention of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in 1934 a declaration was issued in which the organization denied any involvement in the plot to murder the Archbishop. Instead, the declaration adamantly insisted that outside political forces, namely the Soviet Union, were responsible for the national and ecclesiastical friction. The statement ended with an appeal to followers not to forsake the cause of the A.R.F. and to stand firmly in extending moral and financial support to their innocent friends in prison in order to secure their freedom.[1]

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[1] Editorial, "New Eork'i Tadavarout'ean Arhtiv" ("The Trial of New York"), Hairenik, June 15, 1934; Atamian, The Armenian Community, p. 369.

[2] Hairenik Weekly, August 24, 1934; Editorial, "Kani Me Dzanot' P'asder" ("Few Known Facts"), Hairenik, August 5,1934.

The far-reaching implications of this crime were that the Tashnag Party solidified the schism which was initiated at the Diocesan Convention on September 3-4, 1933. The community, already torn by dissension, now produced a complex phenomenon wherein ideological and political differences gave way to hatred and hostility of unprecedented magnitude. An Armenian belonged either to one side or the other; there was no middle road.

The crisis in the Church was far from being resolved. Each side found the other responsible for the chaos. Violent refutations and heated debates appeared in the partisan media, serving only to prolong the controversy. Anger and resentment clouded the judgement of people and leaders alike. These were truly unhappy days for the Church; political organizations, more than at any other time, were all too ready to intervene in the affairs of the Church. The Church that had survived through so many storms was thought to be sinking in high waters, and it was to be a long time before the wind was stilled and relative calm prevailed.[1]

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[1] "Haydararout'iwn" ("Declaration"), Hairenik, August 14, 1934.

E. The Aftermath: Days of Widespread Anarchy

The verdict of the trial left the community divided. Labels and name-calling were frequent, and terms such as "inner enemies," "inner Turk," "Bolsheviks," "Nazis," and "Chekists," were commonplace. Even the murdered Archbishop was called a "monster" and his body referred to as a "rotten corpse."[2]

A second aspect of this division was the split in the Church, which was cutting deeper into the life of the community. The Tashnag Party firmly stood by its claim that the wrongdoers "were only those who had given proof of their unshaken loyalty to Ēchmiadzin." This latter group was labeled as pro-Soviet and their church as dissident. The common Tashnag notion was that as long as the seat of the Armenian Church was in Soviet Armenia, it automatically was subject to the encroachment of the Bolsheviks. The Tashnag press often took issue with Ēchmiadzin and repeatedly made charges against the Catholicos whom they considered a tool of the Communists. The following words are illustrative of this rhetoric:

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[1] On December 12, 1958, Governor Averill Harriman of New York signed an order granting freedom for Madt'eos Lēylēgian and Nshan Sarkisian. The two were released on December 17, 1958. The *Hairenik* commented that "... this news should cause happiness to the hearts of all freedom-loving Armenians. The release of these two men marks the end of a twenty-five year tragedy which caused sorrow for the entire community. A sad page in Armenian life has ended and a new page of peace has been opened." "Engerner M. Lēylēgian Ew N. Sarkisian Azad Garts'agouin" ("Comrades M. Lēylēgian and N. Sarkisian Are Released"), *Hairenik*, December 14, 1958; December 21, 1958.

[2] "Hamperout'iwně Geank' Ē" ("Patience is Life"), *The Gotchnag*, September 8, 1934, p. 843.

> Ēchmiadzin is in bondage and has become a tool of the Soviet Cheka. Echmiadzin, under pressure from the Cheka, not only acts contrary to the best interests of the Church, but has trod upon her traditions since time immemorial by assuming a dictatorial air, by issuing orders right and left, by disrespecting the will of the people, oblivious of her Christian calling, and by becoming a form of spiritual Cheka for the Armenians in the Diaspora.[1]

Furthermore, the Tashnag Party refused to end their mutiny against the authority of Father Mamprē Kalfaian, the Locum-Tenens of the Diocese, who enjoyed the paternal support of the Catholicos. Ten clergymen had cast their lot with the Tashnag Party in rebelling against Father Kalfaian. They were supported by the dissident Central Executive Committee whose Locum-Tenens was a defrocked clergyman, Father Nshan

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[1] "Ēchmiadzinē̆ T'ē Ch'egan" ("Ēchmiadzin Or Cheka"), Hairenik, August 2, 1934.

P'ap'azian.[1] It was this body that, on February 1, 1934, had dispatched a telegram to the Catholicos requesting his intervention on their behalf.[2] The response from Archbishop Kēork Chēōrēk'jian, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Ēchmiadzin, brought total dismay and disappointment to this group. It read as follows:

> It is the will of the Pontiff and his order that you recognize the temporary Diocesan body, that you dissolve your Central Executive Committee, and advise those clergymen under your jurisdiction to comply with the authority of the Locum-Tenens. The Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos, invested with full powers to deal with the situation, will soon leave for America.[3]

The dissident group lost no time in refuting the orders of the Pontiff. Their answer expressed a spirit of separatism. The cable read: "The Central Executive Committee continues as previously to perform its duties in accord with the Constitution and unwritten law."[4] This was a clear sign of factional strife and further aggravation and division for the Church. Communication between the dissidents and Ēchmiadzin had ceased for the time being.

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[1] Kēork Chēōrēk'jian, "Kerakoyn Khorhrti Oroshoume Ergou Garkaloudzout'eants' Shourch" ("The Decision of the Supreme Council About the Two Defrocked Priests"), The Gotchnag, August 18, 1934, p. 783; Editorial, "Barhagdich' Egeghets'aganner Gĕ Badjouin" ("Provocative Priests Are Punished"), Baikar, August 17, 1934.

[2] Bardizian, p. 266.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[4] *Ibid.*

The Tashnag Party argued that the real causes of present hostility and disunity within the community were Father Kalfaian and the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese. They rejected the directives of the Catholicos against Father P'ap'azian and Martougēsian, and instead praised their courage and demanded that Ēchmiadzin reconsider its decision to punish these clerics. The Tashnag Party warned Ēchmiadzin in the following words:

> The people are superior to Ēchmiadzin and Fathers Martougēsian and P'ap'azian are the servants of the people, an expression of their will. Thus they will continue to labor as in the past. Ēchmiadzin must realize that she has to deal with the great mass of the people and not only with a group of clergymen.[1]

However, the Catholicos notified the Diocese that the case of the punished clergymen would not be reconsidered "...until they realize their error and, guided with a sense of discipline, become subject to the legitimate Diocesan authority which is confirmed by the Catholicos."[2] Once again this order was challenged by the Tashnags who rejected it on the usual grounds, that is, that behind Ēchmiadzin's decision stood the spectre of the Soviet Secret Service.[3]

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[1] "Ēchmiadzni Anartar Hramannerĕ" ("The Unjust Directives of Ēchmiadzin"), Hairenik, August 16, 1934.

[2] "Bashdōnagan Haghortakrout'iwn Azkayin Arhachnortarani" ("Official Communique by the National Diocese"), Baikar, October 12, 1934.

[3] Editorial, "Ch'egayi Nor Sbarhnalikĕ" ("The New Threat of Cheka"), Hairenik, October 16, 1934.

In spite of Tashnag attempts to minimize and diminish the supreme authority of Ēchmiadzin, the Catholicos often forwarded encyclicals to his flock in America instructing them to be mindful of their spiritual welfare and to seek national and ecclesiastical unity. On August 20, 1934, the Catholicos directed and encyclical to Father Kalfain encouraging him to exercise patience and wisdom in executing the duties of his office. The Catholicos further urged that Father Kalfain labor to strengthen and reorganize the churches under his spiritual leadership until ecclesiastical unity under the lawful Diocesan authority was restored.[1]

In response to the requests of many parishes, the Central Executive Committee unanimously decided on July 26, 1935, to elevate Father Kalfaian to the rank of Bishop. He was deemed most worthy of that office because of the fortitude and sense of loyalty he had displayed during the turbulent and rancorous civil war in the Church.[2] The Catholicos in Ēchmiadzin informed the Diocesan body of the elevation of Father Kalfaian.[3] On October 31, 1935, Bishop Kalfaian returned to New York from Ēchmiadzin. Impassioned opposition again arose against the elevation of the Bishop, and many were unwilling to submit to his authority.

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[1] "Azkayin Arhachnortaran" ("National Diocese"), The Gotchnag, October 6, 1934.

[2] "Haydararout'iwn Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Official Notice of the National Central Council"), The Gotchnag, August 10, 1955, p. 759.

[3] "Ebisgobosagan Tserhnatrout'iwn" ("Episcopal Ordination"), The Gotchnag, September 7, 1935, p. 856.

During these days of anarchy there occurred in Cranston, Rhode Island, on March 17, 1935, an attempt on the life of Father Martougēsian while he was leaving a private home after funeral services.[1] The assailant, George Nazarian, shot at Father Martougēsian three times, wounding him in the arm, Nazarian confessed to committing the crime in the spirit of revenge because, he said, Father Martougēsian had been the mastermind behind the murder of Archbishop Tourian.[2] Once again, the community was plunged into convulsions, especially in Tashnag quarters.[3] Both sides agitated against each other with renewed fervor, and ecclesiastical and community politics again entered another phase of strife.

Tashnag disobedience reached new heights with the announcement that the dissident Central Executive Committee had made plans for the convocation of a Diocesan Convention on October 26, 1934, at Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church in New York. The agenda of the Convention included the organization of the Diocese of America, reexamination of the National Constitution, election of the Primate, and the problem of the Armenian language schools.[1]

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[1] "Mahap'orts Garkaloydz Martougēsian Vartabedi Vray" ("Assassination Attempt on the Defrocked Priest Martougēsian") *The Gotchnag*, March 23, 1935, p. 280; Editorial, "Tadabardelin Ojir Me" ("A Deplorable Crime"), *The Gotchnag*, March 23, 1935, p. 268. "Hayr Ghewont Vartabed Martougēsiani Mahap'ortsin Manramasnout'iwnnerĕ" ("Details of the Assassination Attempt on Father Martougēsian"), *Hairenik*, March 21, 1935.

[2] "Hayr Ghewont Vartabed Martougēsiani Mahap'ortsin Manramasnout'iwnnerĕ", *Hairenik*, March 21, 1935.

[3] "Berjakhōs Hamemadout'iwn Mĕ" ("An Elucidative Comparison"), *Hairenik*, March 22, 1935.

Father Kalfaian issued a statement on September 28, 1934, refuting the legality of the dissident Central Executive Committee and its claim to be the ecclesiastical government of the community.[2] What the Tashnags deemed vital for their cause was viewed with grave concern by those loyal to the Diocese. The leaders of the Tashnag Party were seeking to establish a dissident self-governing Diocese and to lay plans for the organization of their own churches outside the jurisdiction of Ēchmiadzin. In an editorial in the Hairenik entitled, "The Forthcoming Representative Assembly," this separatist movement was mnaifested in such a manner as to discredit Ēchmiadzin and to humiliate her in her role of providing spiritual and intellectual guidance to her followers. They recommend that all judicial power of the Catholicos be terminated and that his authority be reduced only to spiritual oversight.

> We must delete from the Constitution those articles which afford executive powers to the Catholicos. The Catholicos must remain only as a spiritual head

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Hrawēr" ("Official Invitation"), Hairenik, September 6, 1934.

[2] "Bashdōnagan Haghortakrout'iwn Azkayin Arhachnortarani" ("Official Communique of the National Diocese"), Baikar, September 28, 1934.

> in matters concerning the doctrines and rituals of the Armenian Church. The settlement of all other issues, especially administrative, should become the realm of the Religious Council and the Diocesan Convention.[1]

The dissident Convention met on October 26, 1934, amidst animosity and contempt. Superficial enthusiasm pervaded the Convention as representatives attempted to hide feelings of skepticism. The authority of the Catholicos was outwardly welcomed, but his jurisdiction and intervention in administrative affairs were circumvented. At the same time the spiritual leadership of Father Kalfaian was rejected. Instead Father Nshan P'ap'azian was recognized as the Locum-Tenens and as the head of the Tashnag-oriented Central Executive Committee.[2]

It is interesting to note that in the ensuing days and months no mention was made of this Convention and its accomplishments. Indeed, with national passions running high, this separatist movement was looked upon with shame, further deepening the ecclesiastical storm. Degradation and excommunication were demanded for the perpetrators of the split in the Church. The non-Tashnag element came to realize that it was expecting too much to demand that the Tashnag Party give up its burning ambition of political leadership. They urged their parishoners to reckon with the fact that "the separation of the Tashnag element from the Armenian Church and the Diocese of the Church is not an *evil*, but a *blessing*. The unity of the Armenian Church has not been shaken, but solidified."[1]

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[1] Editorial, "Kalik' Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově" ("The Forthcoming Diocesan Convention"), Hairenik, September 16, 1934.

[2] "Inch' Ashkhadank'ner Gadarets' Amerigayi Hayots' Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově" ("Accomplishments of the National Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), Hairenik, October 16, 1934; October 18, 1934; "Deghegakir Azkayin Getronagan Varch'out'ean" ("Report of the National Central Executive Committee"), Hairenik, October 19, 1934; October 20, 1934.

Regardless of who was responsible for institutionalizing the division the Tashnags never enjoyed the benefits of Church organization. They always ran a poor second and something always happened to set them back. The Tashnag separatist movement had its share of problems. The stigma attached to their name as the killers of the Archbishop could not be escaped. The feuds of the old country carried over into the ecclesiastical storm besetting the Church in the United States. There were only a few community-conscious individuals who spoke of genuine unity to be accomplished through meaningful negotiations. Their appeals in the name of patriotism failed to unite the Armenian-Americans. As expected, the time had come for the Catholicos to intervene in an attempt to end the crisis.

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[1] "Bēdk' Ē Tatrin Tawerě Ēchmiadzni Tēm" ("Plots Against Ēchmiadzin Must Cease"), *Baikar*, October 4, 1934.

F. A Mission to End the Ecclesiastical Crisis

Ēchmiadzin was anxious to bring about a solution to the ecclesiastical crisis in America. On August 1, 1934, a telegram signed by Archbishop Kēork Chēōrēk'jian, Chairman of the Supreme Spiritual Council in Ēchmiadzin, requested that the Diocesan Convention scheduled for October, be postponed until the arrival in America of the Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos.[1] Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian, a member of the Supreme Spiritual Council, was designated as this Plenipotentiary-at-large. His mission was to visit the Armenian colonies of the Middle East and Europe, as well as the United States, in an attempt to establish peace and harmony. In particular his assignment was to heal dissension and to promote solidarity in the Armenian Church in America. Another phase of his mission included a fund-raising campaign for the Holy See.

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was a profound scholar, eloquent preacher, and a well-known authority in paleography and illustrated manuscripts and Church architecture. He responded to the challenge of his mission with earnestness. Due to the deep-rooted antagonism between rival groups in America, however, the anticipated peace was not accomplished and the principal part of his mission remained unfulfilled. His visit did not lead to reconciliation, and the division in the Church showed definite signs of permanency.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1936, p. 12.

1. Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian (1867-1952): Biographical Notes

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was born of humble parentage on December 17, 1867, in the village of Maghavouz, province of Gharapagh in northwestern Armenia.[1] He received his elementary schooling in the village school and in 1882 enrolled at the Kēorkian Seminary at Ēchmiadzin. After seven years of study he was ordained a deacon in June of 1899, fully convinced that priesthood was the best road by which he could serve his Church and nation.

The young deacon had already impressed his clerical elders and teachers with his studiousness. They wished him to pursue his higher education in European institutions. Consequently, he journeyed to Germany and arrived in Berlin on August 3, 1890. He enrolled in the University of Leipzig, pursuing theological and philosophical studies. Four years later, in 1894, he earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Theology.[2] His thesis was entitled, "The Origin of the

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[1] These biographical notes are based on materials provided by the late Bishop Terenig P'ōladian, former Dean of the Antelias Seminary, and close associate of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian. It is entitled Autobiography, as told by Father P'ōladian, and traces the life of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian from his birth until 1905. The narrative from 1905 to 1952, the time of his death, was continued by Father Knēl Jērējian, former director of the press of the Catholicate of Cilicia. Both materials appeared in a dedicatory issue of the Hask, XVII (July-September, 1952), pp. 211-232; Boyajian, The Pillars of the Armenian Church, pp. 389-412.

[2] Boyajian, The Pillars of the Armenian Church, p. 382; Yeghishē Gizirian, "Garegin Hovsēp'ian, Scholar", The Armenian Church, XIV (October, 1971), 3-5.

Doctrine of One Will According to Armenian and Greek Sources."

Upon his return to Ēchmiadzin he was ordained into the sacred priesthood in March of 1898, and was assigned a teaching post in the seminary. As a scholar he participated in numerous scientific expeditions to various historical sites at home and abroad and also made many photographic copies of historical manuscripts for later compilation and publication. His findings have been collected in numerous volumes, among which are Khrch'out'ean Arouesde Hin Hayots' Mēch ("The Art of Paleography in Ancient Armenians"), Khaghpagiank' Gam Brhōshiank' Hayots' Badmout'ean Mēch (Khaghpagiank' and Brhōshiank' ("Armenian Dynasties")in Armenian History"); Niwt'er ew Cusoumnasirout'iwnner Hay Arouesdi Ew Mshagoyt'i Badmout'ean ("Material and Studies for the History of Armenian Art and Culture"), and Hishadagarank' Tserhakrats' ("Memorabilia Manuscripts").[1]

In May, 1917, Father Hovsēp'ian was elevated to the rank of Bishop. One year later, on May 26, he took part in the Battle of Sardarabad, where the Armenians, although ill-equipped and ill-trained, displayed heroic courage and patriotism against the Turkish Army.[2] Bishop Hovsēp'ian was a source of inspiration for the Armenian volunteers, literally jumping from trench to trench, exhorting the Armenian defenders to resist the enemy. The presence of their spiritual father proved rewarding to the soldiers. An attractive figure, dressed in the black cassock and pointed cowl of the Armenian clergy, he was reminiscent of the heroic Ghewont Erēts'.[1] The enemy was finally routed.

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[1] A complete list of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's published and unpublished articles appears in the dedicatory issue of Hask, XVII (July-September), 1952, pp. 264-269.

[2] Bedros Norhad, "Ghewont Yeretz at the Battle of Sardarabad," The Armenian Church, V (June, 1962), 4.

After the sovietization of Armenia in 1920, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian became departmental head of Armenian Art and Archaeology in the University of Erevan. He also served on the Committee for the Preservation of Historical Treasures and was an associate member in the Institute of Science.

Subsequently, as a part of the harsh policy of the Communists toward the Church, church treasures and properties were confiscated and heavily taxed. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was ordered by Catholicos Kēork V to undertake a fund-raising campaign to improve the financial standing of the monastery at Ēchmiadzin. The faithful in Armenia, in spite of their fear of political oppression, came to the rescue of their Mother Church in her darkest hour of trial and impoverishment.

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[1] Ghewont Erēts' was an Armenian clergyman who fought with Saint Vartan the Brave against the Persians in A.D. 451 to defend Christianity against the Persian Zorastranism. He became a symbol of faith and courage for the Armenian soldiers.

2. The Plenipotentiary-at-Large

Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian's visit to the major Armenian ecclesiastical centers and Armenian colonies included two tasks: (1) to urge Armenian nationals everywhere to bury their differences and reunite for the perpetuation of their faith and culture, and (2) to solicit funds to alleviate the financial difficulties of the Mother Church in Ēchmiadzin.[1] To accomplish his mission Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was delegated by Catholicos Khorēn I with special authority to settle issues confronting parishes or colonies.[2] Through his visit to the United States, he was hopeful of ending the ecclesiastical crisis.

The Archbishop's itinerary included stops in the Middle East and Europe. From the outset his appointment created an air of curiosity and suspicion among Armenians abroad.[3] However, it soon became apparent that the partisan news media provided their own interpretations of the Plenipotentiary's mission.

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[1] Antranig Zaroukian, "Sp'iurhk'i Dasnameagnerě" ("The Decades of the Diaspora"), *Nayiri*, February 1, 1970; Editorial "Hayrabedagan Badouirgě" ("The Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos"), *Sion*, IX (February, 1935), p. 37; "Gatoghigosagan Badouiragě" ("The Plenipotentiary"), *Hairenik*, July 29, 1934.

[2] "Ēchmiadzni Badouiragin Ardasahmanean Arhakelout'ean Nbadagě" ("The Purpose of the Plenipotentiary's Mission to the Diaspora"), *The Gotchnag*, December 15, 1934, p. 1195.

[3] Editorial, "Hayrabedagan Nouiragě" ("The Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos"), *The Gotchnag*, December 22, 1934, p. 1203.

All Catholicosal efforts to remedy conditions in the United States were viewed by the Tashnag Press as "unwarranted interference" promoted by Soviet authorities to meddle in the life of the Armenian Church to create further dissension and disorder. In an editorial in the Hairenik in July, 1934, the Tashnag press signaled the course it intended to pursue.

> There is no doubt that the Catholicos of All-Armenians, without the consent of the Cheka, cannot dispatch a simple letter to the diaspora, let alone a Plenipotentiary. If the Cheka does not interfere with the mission of the Plenipotentiary, that signifies that the Soviet government sees merit in his forthcoming visit to America. This is because of either one of the following: (1) either the Soviet government wants to complete its destructive activities in the Armenian community and Church of America through the Plenipotentiary, or (2) the Soviet government wants to end the storm it has created which may prove to be detrimental to their prestige and which can be of no value to them.[1]

The editorials of the Hairenik often expressed extreme skepticism over the outcome of the Plenipotentiary's mission. They were strongly convinced that, instead of peace and stability, new internecine strife would result in the Armenian communities. What further inflamed Tashnag opposition to Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was the fact that he often made patriotic statements praising the economic and cultural achievements of Soviet Armenia. The Tashnag press saw these statements as only overzealous propaganda by the Plenipotentiary on behalf of Bolshevik interests, conducted at their bidding.[1] Such arguments were repudiated by the non-Tashnags who were enthusiastic over the accomplishments of Armenia. The Tashnag charges of "Soviet agent" or "spy" with reference to the Archbishop were rejected by non-Tashnag elements, and their press repudiated the relentless efforts of the Tashnags to discredit Ēchmiadzin.[2]

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[1] "Ēchmiadzni Badouiragin Kaloun Arht'iw" ("On the Occasion of the Plenipotentiary's Arrival"), Hairenik, July 29, 1934.

The Armenian Bolsheviks in America also expressed extreme negativism toward the Holy See and the mission of the Plenipotentiary. Malicious reports attempted to discredit the Archbishop and his work. In a discussion of the unhealthy climate of the Armenian communities, The Gotchnag, official organ of the Armenian Protestants, summarized the situation in the following words:

> There are two strongholds remaining for us: Soviet Armenia and the Catholicosal See of Ēchmiadzin. What a deplorable state they are in. Torrents of bombs are falling upon them, not from alien hands, but from Armenian hands--the enemy within. Yes, the target of Tashnagts'ōut'iwn is 'Armenia reborn' and for the Communist, Ēchmiadzin. These two forces, although opposed to each other, continue their strategy of propaganda with like viciousness. The strategy of the Communists, especially the fanatics of America, is more contemptible in their role as traitor. The Tashnag press accuses Ēchmiadzin of being an agent of the Cheka while the Communists accuse the Pontiff and his Plenipotentiary, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, of

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[1] Editorial, "Ēchmiadzni Tēm Bayk'arin Nbadagě" ("The Aim of the Struggle Against Ēchmiadzin"), Baikar, April 30, 1935.

> sabotaging against the Soviet Union in alliance with the Fascist enemy the Tashnag Party.[1]

The majority of Armenians, nevertheless, gave indications of rallying to the support of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, fully realizing that the Catholicos would do all he could to terminate the dissension.

The task confronting the Plenipotentiary was formidable. The situation in America was volatile after decades of agitation. Problems other than those of an ecclesiastical nature plagued the Church in America. The mission of the Plenipotentiary demanded wisdom, charity, and understanding to bring about order from chaos and to render the Armenian Church in America a better instrument for religious work.

G. Roadblocks to Reconciliation

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian arrived in the United States on April 8, 1936. It was his first visit to America. He received a cordial welcome from the Armenian partisan dailies in Boston. After the formalities connected with his arrival, he charted his course of action. He held numerous discussions and conferences with leaders of the dissident group and with those loyal to Ēchmiadzin. His efforts to adjudicate the strife in the Church and institute a four-year plan of reunification failed.

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[1] Editorial, "Oghpam Zk'ez Hayots' Ashkharh" ("Woe to the Land of Armenia"), The Gotchnag, December 11, 1937, p. 1297.

Both sides presented charges and accused the opposite camp for having contributed toward the failure of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's mission.

1. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian in America

When Archbishop Hovsēp'ian arrived in New York harbor he was warmly welcomed by Bishop Mamprē Kalfaian, the Locum-Tenens, and Bishop Hovsep' Garabedian and a throng of Armenians.[1] From there the Archbishop was escorted to Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church on 30th Street, where the traditional dedication service was held and the faithful received the blessings of His Excellency. As he outlined the purpose of his mission to America, the Archbishop left a favorable impression upon his listeners. He also conveyed to them the Patriarchal blessings and news of cultural and scientific developments of the homeland.

From there the crowd moved into the Holy Cross Church where the tomb of the martyred Archbishop Tourian rested. Here Archbishop Hovsēp'ian officiated at the Service for the Repose of Souls. The main thrust of the Archbishop's talk in the Church urged the faithful to act charitably toward one another rather than to wallow in controversy and dispute.[1] After the ceremonies a reception was held at the Bosphorus Restaurant where several hundred persons paid homage to the Plenipotentiary and wished him well in his mission.

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[1] "Gat'oghigosagan Nouirag Kerashnorh Dēr Karekin Ark'ebisgobos Hovsēp'ian Niw Eork' Hasaw" ("The Plenipotentiary to the Catholicos Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian Arrived in New York"), The Gotchnag, April 18, 1936, p. 376.

The Archbishop made his headquarters at the Hotel Seville in New York. From there he embarked upon extensive parish visitations to Philadelphia, Washington, New Britain, Boston, and Detroit. Wherever he went he was received by the Armenian community and church organizations. His itinerary included officiating at religious services and preaching and speech-making at church gatherings and testimonials. His lectures on the Armenian Church Armenian history, the homeland and people attracted huge crowds and became forums of enlightenment and inspiration. His eloquence, his logic, his depth and thoroughness, his sincerity and openness not only enchanted his audiences but commanded their respect and adoration.[2] He admonished the faithful to secure ways and means of establishing peace and urged them to remain loyal to the authority of Catholicos Khorēn at Ēchmiadzin.

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[1] "Gatoghisoagan Nouirag Kerashnorh Dēr Karekin Ark'ebisgobos Niw Eork'" Gĕ Zhamanē" ("The Plenipotentiary to the Catholicos Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian Arrives in New York"), Baikar, April 10, 1936.

[2] Kh. Bēdishian, "Gat'oghigosagan Nouirag Kerashnorh Karekin Ark'ebisgobos Hovsēp'iani Arhachin Tasạkhosout'iwnĕ" ("The First Lecture of the Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian"), Baikar, April 26, 1936.

The Plenipotentiary had brought with him three encyclicals from the Pontiff which designated him as the Plenipotentiary and instructed him to find a means of establishing peace.[1] These encyclicals invested Archbishop Hovsēp'ian with full powers to solve the discord and admonished the Armenians of the United States to sow peace rather than partisanship, love instead of hate, brotherly affection in place of fratricidal strife. The encyclicals made a strong appeal to the faithful to raise funds for the renovation of the Cathedral and Monastery in Ēchmiadzin.[2] The encyclicals also appealed to the faithful to support the homeland in her attempt to rebuild.

From the outset the Archbishop was subjected to pressures of various forms. He was bombarded with calls and communications from committees, fraternal societies, and political organizations, as well as spiritual and lay leaders. Despite these outward appearances of calm, the situation in the United States remained uneasy. Each side insisted upon the correctness of its own position. They soon engaged in a barrage of abusive name-calling, thus obscuring the real issues. The Armenian Communist press also helped foil the mission of the Archbishop.

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[1] Hovhannēs Awakian, "Hantisawor Badarak" ("High Mass"), The Gotchnag, May 16, 1936, pp. 470-471.

[2] Subsequently, a Fund Raising Committee was formed and a campaign was initiated. In spite of the Depression, the Archbishop succeeded in raising, $35,000. Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Sourp Ēchmiadzni Noroukout'ean Ew Bahbanout'ean Anhrazheshdout'iwnĕ" ("The Necessity of Renovation and Restoration of Holy Ēchmiadzin"), The Gotchnag, June 13, 1936, pp. 567; Boyajian, The Pillars of the Armenian Church, p. 402.

An ecclesiastical storm erupted when Archbishop Hovsep'ian issued his first letter entitled, "For the Benefit of Peace and Clarity of Mind," on September 15, 1936. In it he admonished the feuding parties to terminate their civil war in the Church. He proposed a "four year plan of reunification to end the crisis and the split in the Church."[1] The document described the unhealthy situation and turmoil within the Church. It noted that there were in existence two Diocesan Conventions and two Central Executive Committees. The priesthood and the laity cast their loyalty with one or the other. The Archbishop further reminded the faithful that he wished to end the ecclesiastical division in accordance with the spirit of the Pontifical encyclicals. The Archbishop stated:

> We have formulated a plan whereby the present temporary Central Executive Committee will invite the membership of the Diocesan Convention, convened in the Hotel Martinique from September 2-3, 1933, to end the crisis intelligently. Our goal is to form a new, impartial church-loving and patriotic executive for a four-year term, whose jurisdiction will extend over all. We are negotiating with the dissident faction to terminate the existence of those organizations, such as the Diocesan Convention and its Central Executive Committee, which are not recognized by the authority in Ēchmiadzin.

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[1] "Amerigahay Zhoghovourtian Mdk'eri Baydzarhout'ean Ew Khaghaghout'ean Hamar" ("For the Illumination and Mental Tranquility of the Armenian People"), Baikar, September 24, 1936.

> We have requested of the priests of the dissident group to abide by disciplinary measures and to pledge obedience to the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese and to the Pontiff.[1]

The reaction among opposing groups to Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's letter was one of dismay and criticism. They made it clear that although each craved for unity each faction had its own concept of reunification.

2. The Position of the Diocese

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian met with the Central Executive Committee of the Diocese and community leaders to discuss all aspects of the schism. The Central Executive Committee presented an elaborate memorandum to the Plenipotentiary pointing out the difficulty of easing tensions between the dissidents and those loyal to the Catholicos.[2]

An editorial of the anti-Tashnag Baikar entitled, "The Declaration of the Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos," strongly rejected the four-year plan of reunification proposed by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.[3] The editorial commented that, prior to the arrival of the Pelnipotentiary, the Pontiff at Ēchmiadzin had been kept well-informed of developments in the crisis of the Church in America. Consequently, the Catholicos had issued several encyclicals condemning the dissident faction, the Tashnags, and the priests who collaborated with them in activities detrimental to the Church. On the other hand, the editorial observed that several other encyclicals had sanctioned the validity of the present administration of the Diocese under the spiritual leadership of Bishop Kalfaian, the legitimate Locum-Tenens. In reference to the exclusion of Tashnag element from the Church the editorial vindicated its position.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1936, p. 21.

[3] Editorial, "Gatoghigosagan Nouirag Srpazanin Haydararout'iwně ("Declaration of the Plenipotentiary"), Baikar, September 25, 1936.

> Because of the geographical distance, the Pontiff was unaware that the isolation of the Tashnag segment of Armenians contributed to the solidification of spiritual unity and tranquility of the inner life of the Armenian Church and community. The removal of the Tashnag element, which is a source of disruption, separation, and politicization of the Church, has contributed to the welfare of the Church and national affairs.[1]

The Archbishop was reminded that within the four months since his arrival he should have realized that those loyal to the Diocese had stood in defense of the authority of the Holy See at Ēchmiadzin. The very survival of the community, the editorial continued, depended on the following premise:

> Our people have restored peace and unity to the Church by isolating from the Church and national life those terrorists--the evil from within--who murdered the Archbishop and poisoned the Armenian national life.[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid. This view was even adopted by The Gotchnag, the Armenian Protestant periodical sympathetic to the people loyal to Ēchmiadzin. The reference to the Tashnags in an editorial stated that their separation was not ill-fortune, but on the contrary, national life found its peace and gave the Church

A rapproachment to the dissident group, the editorial stated, would usher in a new era of strife and bloodshed. It further rejected the proposal of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian to create an administrative unity. The editorial cautioned the Archbishop with a last piece of advice:

> Any arrangements made in the name of the unity and harmony of the Church, both administrative and spiritual, necessitate the cooperation of that segment of Armenians who are dedicated to the preservation of the best interests of the Armenian Church and fatherland.[1]

This was the atmosphere in which the Diocesan delegates gathered to attend the long-delayed Diocesan Convention which took place on October 10-11, 1936, at the Holy Cross Church in New York.[2] The Convention was presided over by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian and Bishop Mamprē Kalfaian, the Locum-Tenens, and consisted of four sessions. The Convention passed several resolutions, most significant among which was to continue the affairs of the Church under the aegis of the duly elected Central Executive Committee of 1933 and the incumbent Locum-Tenens.[3]

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the opportunity to free herself from the endless intrigues and feuds and to dedicate herself to her true mission.

[1] _Ibid._

[2] _Adenakrout'iwn_, New York, October 10-11, 1936, p. 3.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 33-34.

In the third session the Plenipotentiary delivered his address to the delegates. He began by tracing the intricate steps of the ecclesiastical controversy. At several points he noted that several columnists had taken advantage of the general apathy and misunderstanding prevalent among the public, thereby casting doubt upon his mission. The main thrust of his address emphasized the creation of an impartial Central Executive Committee to whose authority all would subscribe. Archbishop Hovsep'ian stated,

> We wish to form an impartial Central Executive Committee agreeable to all dedicated to pursue only and ecclesiastical policy, without rendering the Church into an arena for political activities. We intend to examine and find the source of the evil, that erroneous contention which gives priority to political issues over the interests of the Church, such as love, brotherhood, spiritual nourishment, and cultural values which unite the people and preserve the institution. Our Church has fulfilled this mission throughout her history.[1]

For the realization of his plan the Archbishop outlined ten points.

(1) The Church would be free from any political administration, and all would be subject to and contribute toward her cultural and benevolent endeavors.

(2) A new Central Executive Committee would be elected, with the approval of the Plenipotentiary, for a four-year period, consisting of individuals who are impartial, church-loving and patriotic.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

(3) A new Primate would be elected for a four-year term under the auspices of the new Central Executive Committee and with the consent of the Plenipotentiary.

(4) In order to restore unity and peace to the Church, the dissident Central Executive Committee and the Diocesan Convention would be dissolved. Also, the newly designated Central Executive Committee and the Diocesan Convention held at the Hotel Martinique would be requested to resign voluntarily.

(5) The suspended priests must plead for forgiveness, pledging their loyalty to the new Central Executive Committee and the spiritual authority in Ēchmiadzin.

(6) All churches of the Diocese, together with their trustees and pastors, must pledge obedience to the new Central Executive Committee.

(7) For an indefinite period of time, no Diocesan Convention would be convened, and local Church trustees would be subject to the new Central Executive Committee.

(8) The opposing camps must refrain from confrontations, burying their past differences.

(9) An Advisory Board would be formed to serve as a liaison between the Diocese and the Pontiff in Ēchmiadzin.

(10) The restoration of unity to the Church and the creation of a new Central Executive Committee as outlined in the nine preceding points pending the approval of the Pontiff.

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian also disclosed to the delegates that he had been assured by the Tashnag negotiators that the suspended priests were willing to subject themselves to the Pontifical tribunal and also dissolve the Church bodies which operated under an illegitimate Central Executive Committee.

As he concluded his address, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian requested that he be excused from the Convention in order to grant the delegates an opportunity to express themselves in an unrestrained atmosphere. However, the delegates insisted upon his remaining in the Convention to answer any questions they might have.[1]

Only a few delegates shared the views of the Plenipotentiary. Those who did were quickly and scornfully silenced by the rest. The delegates rejected the Archbishop's plan, which they considered an oversimplification of the ecclesiastical crisis and too favorable to the dissident group.[2] They felt that a compromise with the dissidents would endanger the peace and harmony of the churches and communities loyal to the Diocesan authority and humiliate the Pontiff in Ēchmiadzin.[3]

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[1] Mgrdich' T'ōp'alian, "Amerigahay Azkayin Eresp'okharagan Zhoghov" ("The National Diocesan Convention of Armenians in America"), The Gotchnag, October 24, 1936, p. 1026.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, October 10-11, 1936, p. 34.

The Archbishop then responded with great sorrow and remorse in the following words:

> I see that my appeal has failed completely. I repeat again that my appeal has not been understood. You have placed me in a difficult position. My wish is that you support the authority and integrity of the Mother See, but I cannot make myself understood. Perhaps my Armenian is poor. It is the Pontiff's wish, as well as mine, to restore unity to the Church. It appears that the time is not yet opportune. I have fulfilled my duties before God and in clear conscience. If I have not succeeded, what can I do. Thus, let matters remain as they are and I will report accordingly to the Pontiff. This will be the lesser of two evils. I am defeated, but I repeat, you have not understood me. It is the wish of the Pontiff that if I do not succeed, I must comply with the existing situation. I wish you success![1]

At the beginning of the fourth session, the Chair announced that the Central Executive Committee and the Locum-Tenens would remain in office and continue their work until the next Diocesan Convention. An air of relief pervaded the Convention. The delegates acclaimed their enthusiasm over the Archbishop's last statements and pledged to stand solidly behind him in his efforts to solicit funds for Ēchmiadzin. The following cablegram was dispatched to the Catholicos:

> After listening to the arguments of the delegates at the Convention held on October 11, 1936, at the Holy Cross Church in New York, Archbishop Hovsep'ian has arrived at the decision that the time is not ripe to achieve the needed unity. In the name of the Pontiff he has ordered the Locum-Tenens and the Central Executive Committee to remain in office and continue their duties.[2]

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[1] Ibid.; H. Hovnanian, "Amerigahay Azk. Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov" ("The National Diocesan Convention"), Baikar, October 15, 1936.

[2] Ibid.; "Arhachnortaran Hayots' Amerigayi" ("Diocese of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, October 31, 1936, p.1048.

As an epilogue to the narrative of that Convention, it is reported that when the delegates toasted the Catholicos and his Plenipotentiary at the banquet, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian uttered the following:

> I am a defeated man. I stand for honest deeds. These words of yours are a great consolation to a defeated man. Cable the Pontiff that, although we defeated your Plenipotentiary, yet we have perpetual respect and love for you.[1]

On June 24, 1937, a Catholicosal encyclical was received from Ēchmiadzin which expressed satisfaction over the proceedings and results of the Diocesan Convention.[2] Yet, an ideological conflict continued to linger behind the fighting in the Church. The Pontiff was still determined to prove the supremacy of his spiritual authority over factional fanaticism.

3. The Attitude of the Dissident Group

In the beginning the dissident group adopted a quasi-conciliatory attitude toward the unity mission of the Archbishop. As time passed and the "wait and see" policy wore off, their press hurled attacks against the Pontiff and his representative, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian. The Tashnag Party, it claimed, entered the controversies involving the Church only to block Soviet efforts to dominate the Church for political maneuverings. In an editorial in the *Hairenik*, appearing shortly after the arrival of the Plenipotentiary in America, it was stated that:

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[1] T'ōp'alian, "Amerigahay Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov" The Gotchnag, October 24, 1936, p. 1027.

[2] "Hayrabedagan Gontag" ("Pontifical Encyclical"), Baikar, August 14, 1937.

> We have always whole-heartedly defended the unity of the Armenian Church and have opposed those who have wanted to disrupt her. If the Armenian Church is split into two today, that responsibility does not rest with us. Our stand has always been, and still is, that the Church remains aloof from factional controversies and political struggles. Today, as in the past, we cannot tolerate that the Armenian Church be used to further the interests of a foreign political organization alien to both the Armenian Church and people.[1]

From the outset the dissidents assumed that the opposite camp would attempt to sabotage the mission of the Archbishop in order to maintain the *status quo* they enjoyed. The Tashnag Press declared that the Rhamgavars feared that the Archbishop may succeed to restore unity in the Armenian Church in America.[2] The Tashnags further accused the opposition of creating an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, disturbing the minds of the people with volatile issues by which to prejudice and influence them against Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's negotiations with them.

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[1] Editorial, "Karekin Arkebisgobos Hovsēp'iane Amerigayi Mēch Ew Ir Arhakelout'iwně" ("Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian and His Mission in America"), *Hairenik*, April 14, 1936.

[2] Editorial, "Barhagdich'nerou Nor Khagherě Ew Karekin Srpazani Arhakelout'iwně" ("The New Intrigues of the Provocators and the Mission of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian"), *Hairenik*, April 21, 1936.

The Tashnags also were convinced that their opponents had deliberately isolated the Archbishop from contact or association with them. The fact that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian resided in the Hotel Seville in New York the very same hotel in which Archbishop Tourian had stayed, represented to them a Rhamgavar attempt to abort the Plenipotentiary's mission, because they (the Rhamgavars) considered the present division of the Armenian people advantageous to their factional interests. They further charged unity was being hindered by barriers created by the leaders of the Diocese and their Rhamgavar, Hanch'ag, Communist collaborators.[1] Tashnag interpretation stated that the Rhamgavar represented but a small minority in the community and thus were in constant fear of losing elective chairs to Tashnag candidates in Church and community affairs and organizations.[2]

The Tashnag position suggested that in these confrontations the Rhamgavars, conscious of their minority status, had assumed the self-declared role of defenders of the Church against the alleged Tashnag offenders. The Tashnags claimed that Rhamgavar loyalty to Ēchmiadzin was but a political device by which to prompt the Soviet government to influence the Holy See in the struggle against the Tashnag Party

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[1] Editorial, "Barhagdich'nerou Nor Khagherē̆ Ew Karekin Srpazani Arhakelout'iwnē̆," Hairenik, April 21, 1936.

[2] Editorial, "Barhagdichnerē̆ Gouzēn Sharounagel Irents' Sew Kordzē̆" ("The Provocators Continue Their Dark Activities"), Hairenik, May 5, 1936.

The Tashnag Party interpreted the ecclesiastical controversy through six editorials appearing in the May, 1936, Hairenik which were entitled, "Burning Issues of Armenians of America." These editorials were concerned with the crisis in the Church and its perpetrators, the Armenian Church and Armenian political parties, external causes of the crisis, ecclesiastical rather than political reconciliation, and the inner evil which corrupts and threatens the very existence of the Church and nation.

The first editorial claimed the Tashnag Party was a majority force in the Armenian community. It challenged opponents to participate in a general public election under the direct supervision of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.[1]

In a second editorial the Hairenik reflected upon several causes of the split in the Church and the division in the Armenian community. The article pointed out that the April 24 Observances and the Tri-color affair in Chicago were not isolated incidents but were provocations by Archbishop Tourian bearing shades of Soviet propaganda. The reason for Ēchmiadzin's sanction of Archbishop Tourian's actions, the editorial stated, was that she had become the possession and instrument of the Soviets.[2] Another reason cited for the crisis was the Diocesan Convention of September 2-3, 1933, where Tashnag delegates were in the majority. The editorial concluded that it was because of these reasons that the split in the Armenian Church occurred. It placed full responsibility upon former Primate Tourian and his minority supporters. The murder of the Archbishop was a consequence rather than a cause of the present crisis of the Church in America. It is erroneous then, it was argued, to lead the Plenipotentiary to believe the murder of Tourian was the real cause for the crisis in the Church.

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[1] Editorial, "Amerigahay Hradab Khntirner" ("Burning Issues of the Armenians of America"), Hairenik, May 9, 1936.

[2] Ibid.

A third editorial concerned the Armenian Church and Armenian political parties. This article recounted the instances when the Tashnag Party had come to the aid of the Church in 1903 and 1920, thereby saving her from outside agitators.[1] The Soviets were held solely responsible for the state of affairs, their prime concern being the destruction of the Church. In short, "the Soviet government has left but a skeleton of the Armenian Church in Ēchmiadzin, and that, so it may subject the churches of the diaspora to its control to influence the Armenian colonies."[2]

The fourth editorial claimed the Tashnag Party conducted an unyielding fight against the Soviet Union to whose goals

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[1] This "irrefutable" statement of the Tashnags was questionable and open to argument. It was challenged by their opponents.

[2] Editorial, "Amerigahay Hradab Khntirner" ("Burning Issues of Armenians of America"), Hairenik, May 12, 1936.

Ēchmiadzin had become a willing servant. The Tashnags were convinced that Ēchmiadzin was allowed to exist only because of her potential as a Soviet instrument abroad. They insisted that special training was given to bishops in Ēchmiadzin to prepare them for political missions abroad.[1] The editorial concluded by stating that the causes of the split were external, political and not ecclesiastical.

The fifth editorial concerned ecclesiastical rather than political conciliation. The Tashnags stressed they were not yet ready for a conciliation on political grounds as long as the non-Tashnag organizations continued their pro-Soviet behavior. On the contrary, what the Tashnag Party aspired to, stated the editorial, was the unification of a Church that would remain aloof from political interferences of any type, be they Tashnag or anti-Tashnag.[2]

The final article in the series pinpointed the real problem. It stated that there existed in the life of the Armenian community an "inner evil" which was the source of the ecclesiastical turmoil as well as of all the divisiveness which had permeated the organization.[3] The editorial concentrated its attacks against anti-Tashnag leaders who allegedly fostered disunion and disorder. It reported that, in order to ease the tension within the Church communities and terminate the crisis, these leaders must be removed. The non-Tashnag populace was cautioned to heed these words if Archbishop Hovsēp'ian were to be truly successful in his mission.

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[1] Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, pp. 44-46.

[2] Editorial, "Och' T'ē Michgousagts'agan Ayl Egeghets'agan Hashdout'iwn" ("Ecclesiastical Rather than Political Conciliation"), Hairenik, May 14, 1936.

[3] Editorial, "Nerk'in Ch'arik'ĕ" ("The Evil From Within"), Hairenik, May 15, 1936.

> And if the Armenian populace is unable to restrain their irresponsible leaders, then the entire responsibility for the failure of the Archbishop's mission will rest, not only upon a select group of anti-Tashnag leaders, but upon those who support these incorrigible provocators.[1]

The Tashnag group rallied the support of its followers and launched an all-out campaign against their antagonists and the Archbishop whom they accused of partiality. Illustrative of this was an editorial entitled, "The Poor Beginning of a Mission," in which the Archbishop was criticized for being biased and for ignoring the dissident group, their leaders, the priests, and the churches. The editorial expressed dismay that the Archbishop had placed them in a humiliating situation by supporting the tactics of Diocesan authorities. They complained that "... since his arrival in America, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian has visited only the churches which belong to the Rhamgavar-Bolshevik segment of Armenians and has entirely ignored the churches of his adversaries.[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Editorial, "Arhak'elout'ean Me Tsakhogh Sgzpnaworout'iwně" ("The Poor Beginnings of a Mission"), Hairenik, June 5, 1936.

Furthermore, they claimed that the Committee to raise funds for Ēchmiadzin consisted solely of persons holding other than Tashnag views. The editorial concluded that the purpose of the Plenipotentiary's visit was to serve as an arbitrator who must unite the two separated segments of a divided Church.[1]

The Tashnags insisted upon impartial scrutiny by the Archbishop of the issues involved in the strife. In addition, they demanded that a general vote be taken to indicate the sentiments of the majority of the Armenians.[2] Again they charged the Archbishop with pursuing a course contrary to theirs, a victim of the relentless efforts of their opponents.[3]

The conflict between the Tashnags and non-Tashnags intensified after the Diocesan Convention of October 10-11, 1936, especially when the Tashnags convened their own Diocesan Convention on November 14-15, 1936, at Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church in New York.[4] The dissident group felt that the Plenipotentiary had not succeeded in his mission and that the time had come for the Tashnag group to proclaim officially its stand regarding the unity of the Church. Consequently, an invitation was forwarded to Archbishop Hovsēp'ian to attend the Diocesan Convention of the so-called "freedom-loving Armenians in the majority."[1] In the event he failed to attend the Convention, the Archbishop would give evidence that it was fear of Soviet authorities that prevented him from doing so. If that were the case, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian would have to face the inevitable consequences.

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[1] Editorial, "Arhak'elout'ean Mě Tsakhogh Sgzpnawrout'iwně", Hairenik, June 5, 1936.

[2] Editorial, "Amenayn Hayots' Gat'oghigosi Liazōr Nergayats'outs'ich'in Jarhin Arht'iw" ("On the Occasion of the Issuance of the Appeal of the Plenipotentiary"), Hairenik, September 30, 1936.

[3] Editorial, "Barhagdich'nerě Irent's Terin Mēch" ("The Agitators in Their Role"), Hairenik, May 15, 1936.

[4] "Bashdōnagan Haydararout'iwn" ("Official Notice"), Hairenik, November 8, 1936.

> It is obvious that as long as the minority coalition of the Rhamgavar-Hnch'ag refuses to join with the majority of the Armenian communities of America to form one general Diocese, and if the Pontiff, due to understandable reasons, cannot make his wishes known to the minority coalition which is on friendly terms with the Soviets, the Pontiff must be ready to recognize the churches of the majority of the Armenians in America as a separate diocese. Either unity of churches or two separate legitimate Dioceses--the Plenipotentiary must reckon with either of these two alternatives.[2]

The minutes of the dissident Convention reveal that their Central Executive Committee prior to the meeting had officially invited the Archbishop to attend the Convention. The invitation was extended again after the first session of the Conference.[3] However, much to the regret of the delegates an emissary reported that the Archbishop declined to attend. He responded:

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[1] Editorial, "Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Arhtiw" ("Upon the Occasion of the Diocesan Convention"), Hairenik, November 11, 1936.

[2] Editorial, "Amenayn Hayots' Gat'oghigosi Ew Anor Liazōr Nergayats'outs'ichi Bardaganout'iwnē" ("The Responsibility of the Plenipotentiary of the Catholicos"), Hairenik, November 14, 1936.

[3] "Adenakrout'iwn Amerigayi Hayots' Arhak'elagan Egeghets'woy Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovin" ("The Minutes of the Diocesan Convention of Armenians of America"), New York, November 14-15, 1936, Hairenik, December 4, 1936.

> I cannot attend, first because tomorrow I will celebrate Divine Liturgy. Secondly, your comrades are well aware why I cannot attend. Do not insist that I come. I have told Dr. Karagēozian what you ought to do. Remain loyal to the Mother See and report to me the proceedings and results of your Diocesan Convention.[1]

It was further learned from the report which was presented by Dr. Karagēozian at the Convention that, one week after the Archbishop's arrival in this country, he had met on April 18 and 25 with the Archbishop. These two preliminary meetings paved the way for future discussions regarding the unity of the Church. They were followed by more substantial conferences in which compromises were reached, agreeable to both sides. The topics dealt with such volatile matters as the Armenian Tri-color, the celebrations in honor of the anniversary of the Armenian Republic, and April 24 observances. The Archbishop wished the dissident group to refrain from propagandizing these events and provoking their opponents. Finally, an agreement was reached whereby, for the time being, these issues were not to be discussed and were dropped from the agenda of anticipated future talks.[2] The Tashnag group had agreed upon a draft drawn up by the Archbishop which consisted of eleven points guaranteeing the administrative unity of the Church in America. However, Dr. Karagēozian continued, the Diocesan Convention of October 11, 1936, had vanquished all hopes of reconciliation as even the Archbishop had pronounced his defeat and had yielded the last-minute Catholicosal instructions to maintain the existing situation if it proves impossible to restore the administrative unity of the Church.[1]

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[1] "Adenakrout'iwn," New York, November 14-15, 1936, Hairenik, November 25, 1936.

[2] "Adenakrout'iwn," Hairenik, December 1, 1936.

4. Criticism and Praise of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian

It was unfortunate that leaders on both sides lost sight of the fact that unity required a degree of sacrifice and accommodation. Each side viewed the problem from its own standpoint and found it difficult to adopt any broader perspective. Problems other than those of an ecclesiastical nature plagued the communities. The inner strife of the Church had eroded into the administrative effectiveness of the spiritual organisms of most communities. Church officials were in despair; priests feared losing their posts; and the people had doubts as to the fate of their religion. New grievances were continued as legal suits were brought into court. Priests were retained or discharged at the will of the trustees. The clergy were often regarded with suspicion as a result of their lack of tact. Incompetency among the lay leadership also contributed to the controversy between clergy and lay leaders.

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[1] "Adenakrout'iwn," Hairenik, November 25, 1936.

While the Tashnag camp denounced Archbishop Hovsēp'ian for his "pro-Soviet" leanings, the Armenian Communist press, the *Panvor*, stepped up its campaign against the Archbishop with no less vigor. As to his mission, the *Panvor* stated that "the Plenipotentiary has come to the diaspora and America under the guise of the Armenian Church; in order to have the two segments of the Armenian bourgeoisie--the Rhamgavar and the Tashnag--to have to sit at the round table to reconcile their differences by forming a *united front* against Soviet Armenia."[1] They even went so far as to attach importance to the fact that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian had journeyed to America on a German liner. They criticized him as a tool in the hands of traitor Khanjian and the Fascist Tashnags.[2]

This well illustrates that the conflict of the Church focused particularly on political rather than ecclesiastical issues. From the outset political zealots in all camps attempted to turn the Church into an arena for their political differences. As a result, they brought into the Church incessant disputes, and their political disagreements played a key role in the ecclesiastical strife.

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[1] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Pat'sartsag Skhalě Himk' Pats'artsag Zrbarkout'ean ("The Absolute Accusation Rests upon Absolute Error"), *The Gotchnag*, December 18, 1937, p. 1330.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 1331.

Community-conscious leaders in various communities grew restless over the deplorable situation of the Church and became concerned with restoring the prestige and authority of the Diocese. A new leadership, energetic and determined to bring an end to the uncertainty, was girding itself for a more productive role in the Church. This group opposed those who suggested that the Archbishop return to the homeland.

H. Toward Normalization of Church Affairs

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian had done all he could to terminate the dissension within the Church. The new ecclesiastical administration of the Diocese was expected to be responsive to the needs of its followers.

On May 1, 1937, at the Diocesan Convention held in the Holy Cross Church in New York, Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian, the Locum-Tenens, expressed his desire to be relieved from his duties. However, on May 3, at the regular Central Executive Committee meeting, he yielded to the wishes of the Committee and remained in his post.[1] The two crucial items on the agenda were the election of a new Central Executive

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[1] "Bashdōnagan Haghortakrout'iwn Arhachnortaran Hayots' Amerigayi" ("Official Communique of the Diocese of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, May 29, 1937, p. 541.

Committee and a new Primate. The Central Executive Committee was elected, but the election of a new Primate was tabled until the following year by a vote of 40 to 20.[1] The delegates reached this decision because the Depression and ecclesiastical strife had drained the finances of the Diocese.

At the Convention, the Central Executive Committee also terminated its jurisdiction over the South American Diocese. Due to the geographical distance it was not deemed feasible to provide adequate religious and administrative assistance to these churches. Archbishop Karekin Khach'adourian's designation by Ēchmiadzin in 1937 as Plenipotentiary to Buenos Aires, Argentina, automatically brought an end to the jurisdictional authority previously held by the Diocese over South American churches.[2] Archbishop Khach'adourian formerly had been Primate of the California Diocese.

It was learned at the Convention that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was about to terminate his itinerary and return to Ēchmiadzin. The delegates received the news with deep regret. Prior to his departure from America, scheduled for July 14, 1937, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian took ill on June 11 and was hospitalized in Boston with broncho-pneumonia.[3] He was not discharged until September 1, 1937, and upon his release he remained in the United States because of the development of new ecclesiastical circumstances which demanded his presence here. Both young and old sincerely desired the continuation of his services in the United States. Many thought to have him elected Primate of the Diocese. An editorial in the *Baikar* entitled, "What We Expect from the Plenipotentiary," set the stage for the campaign. The editorial expressed the love and confidence the faithful felt for the Archbishop and their desire to have him stay in the United States.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, May 1-2, 1937, New York, p. 69.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, September 3-4, 1938, New York, p. 77.

[3] "Bashdōnagan Haghortakrout'iwn Arhachnortaran Hayots' Amerigayi" ("Official Communique of the Diocese of the Armenians of America"), The Gotchnag, July 17, 1937, p. 708; July 24, 1937, p. 730.

> The Armenian community of America is in great need of a leader of the stature of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian whose scholarly and spiritual tenets are of distinct value.[1]

A year later, during the Diocesan Convention assembled on September 3-4, 1938, at the Holy Cross Church in New York, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was unanimously elected Primate of the American Diocese.[2] In his acceptance address the newly-elected Primate reiterated that if his election were to be confirmed by Ēchmiadzin, he would tirelessly endeavor for the betterment of the Diocese both on a spiritual and administrative level. It was hoped that, after many stormy years, the Church in America would experience a period of peaceful reorganization and spiritual regeneration under the eminent leadership of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.

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[1] Editorial, "Inch' Gagngalenk' Nouirag Srpazanēn" ("What We Expect of the Plenipotentiary"), *Baikar*, November 27, 1937.

[2] *Adenakrout'iwn*, New York, September 3-4, 1938, p. 104.

However, the path of the new Primate was strewn with many obstacles. Ēchmiadzin was reluctant to confirm his election on the basis that his presence in the Holy See was indispensable.

I. Expansion of Churches

The period of the Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Kalfaian (1933-1939), witnessed the construction of three additional churches. These were the Holy Cross Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts, consecrated on June 21, 1936; the Holy Cross Church in New York City, consecrated on May 17, 1939; Saint James Church in Watertown, Massachusetts, consecrated on October 21, 1937.

In spite of the dire poverty created by the Great Depression, the Armenians in these cities displayed courage and determination in building their Houses of God. A re-evaluation of religious needs motivated Armenians everywhere to seek out the ordinances of the Church.

1. Holy Cross Church, Lawrence, Massachusetts

The earliest Armenian immigrants settled in Lawrence as early as the 1890s. The first Armenian who arrived in this city was Simon Arch'igian, a native of Husēynig, Harpoot, Turkey, who arrived in 1883. From 1900 on it was chiefly families and single males who settled in the city. They were

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[1] Ashjian, *Vij'agats'oyts'ew Badmout'iwn*, p. 128.

primarily employed in textile manufacturing firms, an industry for which the city of Lawrence was famous throughout the United States. The Armenians of Lawrence came mainly from the regions of Harpoot, Ch'mshgadzak, Ch'nkoush, and Arapgir, Turkey.

Although there was no Armenian Church in Lawrence, from 1905 to 1907 Father Arsēn Vehouni provided spiritual guidance to the people of the city.[1] The first attempt to organize the Armenians into a parish was made on December 12, 1912, when approximately one hundred Armenians gathered to elect their first board of Church Trustees.[2] Religious services were held in two Episcopal Churches located on Garden and Jackson Streets. There was no permanent pastor in charge of the parish, which, by the 1920s, had grown to a size of one thousand adherents. Visiting priests conducted religious services and fulfilled the needs of the people.

As the Armenian community grew the need for a church edifice was strongly felt. Consequently, the Church Trustees, on November 1, 1923, appointed a Building Committee which they authorized to purchase a suitable building or plot of land for a new church. On November 21, 1927, land on East Haverhill Street was purchased.[3] In 1931 Father Ghewont Martougēsian conducted the ceremonies for the laying of the foundation. He had been serving the parish as pastor since 1929. According to eye-witness testimony from individuals with whom the writer has spoken, enthusiasm on that day knew no bounds. Factory workers, after long hours of toil, rushed to the site of the Church to pick up shovels, anxious to see the completion of the building. The ladies provided the lunches for the workers. The Ladies' Aid Society of the parish became a moving force behind the church building endeavors, especially with their bazaars and banquets which raised money for the church.

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[1] Ibid., p. 131.

[2] Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Holy Cross Church, Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1956.

[3] Ibid.

The cornerstone of the church was laid on August 28, 1931, with Archbishop Ghewont Tourian, the Primate, officiating at the ceremony. The Great Depression had brought fund-raising campaigns to a standstill and work on the Church ceased temporarily. However, as economic conditions in the country improved, work on the building was resumed. The Church was consecrated on June 21, 1936, by Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian.[1] The redemption of the mortgage on the Church took place on February 3, 1944. The total cost of the Church amounted to $79,000.

Armenians living in the neighboring towns of Methuen, Andover, and Salem, New Hampshire are affiliated administratively with the Church in Lawrence.

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[1] Ibid.

2. Saint James Church, Watertown, Massachusetts

The first Armenians to settle in Watertown were ten young immigrants who sought employment in a small branch factory of the Hood Rubber Company in 1896.[1] By 1902 there were approximately four hundred Armenians employed at the Hood Rubber Company and a "Little Armenia" had begun to develop within the town. In 1909 an influx of Armenians from Cilicia, escaping from the "Adana Massacre," migrated to the United States. A sizable portion of them chose to settle in the suburbs of Boston.

In 1924 the Armenians in Watertown, led by Haygaz Akellian and Lewon Krikorian, expressed a desire to have an Armenian Church. As the idea for a church gained momentum, several meetings were convened at the Coolidge School in Watertown. The first of these meetings took place on July 21, 1924, when a committee was formed to raise funds.[2] At a second meeting on December 14, 1924, a Building Committee was formed, headed by Haygaz Akellian. This Committee was authorized to purchase a suitable site for the church.[3] This was done on March 14, 1927, when land was purchased on 475 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, the present site of the church.

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[1] Souvenir Book, Twentieth Anniversary, St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, Watertown, Mass., 1931-1951; Silver Anniversary, St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, Watertown, Mass., 1957 Thirtieth Anniversary, St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, Watertown, Mass., 1931-1961.

[2] Ashjian, Vijagats'oyts' ew Badmout'iwn, pp. 263-270.

[3] Ibid.

In 1928 the first board of Church Trustees was formed upon the request of the Diocese. Father Shahē Kasbarian of the Holy Trinity Church in Boston served the religious needs of the community until the first pastor, Father Madt'ēos Manigian, arrived in 1930. He served until 1931.[1]

The community of Watertown was about to start construction of their church whén the Great Depression came. All construction ceased for a time. Finally in 1931 a number of men, tired of waiting, gathered tools and set out for the empty lot.[2] The following day they were joined by still others as news of the activity circulated. Donations, although in small amounts, poured in to the Trustees and when the sum was large enough, a steam shovel was hired for a day. "I can still see the women bringing coffee and bread and cheese to the workers," nostalgically reminisces Varoujan Samuelian, editor of the Armenian Mirror Spectator, who at that time was a youngster.[3]

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[1] Souvenir Book, Twentieth Anniversary, St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, Watertown, Mass., 1931-1951.

[2] Varoujan Samuelian, "The Church," Silver Anniversary St. James Church, Watertown, Mass., 1957.

[3] Ibid.

On March 21, 1931, a Membership Meeting was convened to discuss the construction of the Church. There was only $7.50 in the treasury. A Building Committee was elected, headed by Haygaz Akellian, and informal groundbreaking ceremonies took place on August 21, 1931.

On May 22, 1932, Archbishop Ghewont Tourian celebrated Divine Liturgy at the Holy Trinity Church in Boston. On the same afternoon the corner-stone laying ceremonies of the Church in Watertown were conducted.[1] From 1932 to 1937 under almost impossible circumstances, with the Great Depression still taking its toll, the building of the Church was carried on and completed in 1937. Dedication and consecration services were held on October 31, 1937, by Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian, assisted by the Locum-Tenens, Bishop Mamprē Kalfaian, the pastor, Father Eghishē Kalch'enjian, and a host of other clergymen. The Church was named Saint James and Harout'iwn T'oulouk'ian served as Godfather.

In 1946 the Parish House was acquired and in 1948 the Rectory. On September 24, 1967, the dedication of the Cultural and Youth Center took place, a beautiful building which has truly become the center of the community life.[2]

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[1] Ashjian, p. 269; Samuelian, "The Church," Silver Anniversary, St. James Church, 1957.

[2] Sixty-Seventh Diocesan Assembly of the Armenian Church of America, St. James Armenian Church, Watertown, Mass., April 30 - May 3, 1969.

3. Holy Cross Church, New York, New York

The first Armenian to arrive and settle in New York was a student, Khach'adour Osganian, who came in 1834 to study at Columbia University. Up to the 1880's the immigrants migrating to New York were either merchants or students. It was after this time that the influx of new immigrants increased significantly.[1]

The first Armenian Divine Liturgy was celebrated on September 22, 1889, at the Episcopalian Grace Church in New York, Father Hovsēp' Sarajian officiating.[2] By 1901 three pastors provided spiritual administration to the Armenians of metropolitan New York. These clergymen were Fathers Khat Markarian, Sahag Nazarēt'ian, and Vahram Mserlian. Religious services were held in various rented halls. In 1916 Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian became preacher to the Armenians of New York. As a result of a disagreement concerning the purchase of a church located on 27th Street (St. Illuminator's Church) in 1918, a group of trustees and their followers rented a hall on 17th Street where they held religious services. This group organized themselves under the name of Saint Gregory the Illuminator Parish Church.[3] By the early twenties, however, a large portion of the Armenians belonging to Saint Gregory the Illuminator Parish had moved to the northern part of the city, residing in the Washington Heights area in Uptown New York.[1]

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[1] Seropian, "Amerigahay Kaghout'ė Ew Ir Dzakoumnere," *Amerigahay Darets'oyts'ě*, 1912, p. 16.

[2] Ashjian, p. 160.

[3] Ashjian, p. 162. Church services continued to be held in this hall until 1925 when they were moved into another

On September 24, 1926, a meeting was held in the Universalist Church where Armenians held their services in Uptown New York. A Building Committee was elected with Dr. Garabed Eghiaian as chairman. The Committee first considered the purchase of the Universalist Church but later decided upon a Lutheran edifice which was purchased on January 1, 1929, for the amount of $72,000.[2]

The first Armenian Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the new church on January 6, 1929, Armenian Christmas Day. The Great Depression immediately followed and in 1933 Archbishop Tourian was murdered in the Church. The Church was closed to the public until 1937. It was consecrated on May 17, 1937, by Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian.[3] During the period of

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building on 30th Street. They remained here until 1946. In 1958 a three-story building was purchased and the first floor rendered into a Church. In March 1950 the Church was consecrated by Archbishop Sion Manougian and named Saint Gregory the Illuminator. Fifth Consecration Anniversary, St. Gregory Illuminator Church, 1950-1955, pp. 22-24.

[1] Tenth Anniversary, Holy Cross Church of Armenia, New York, 1929-1939.

[2] Twentieth Anniversary, Holy Cross Church of Armenia, New York, 1929-1949.

financial difficulty that the Church underwent in the depression years and later, Haig Kavouk'jian, a dedicated benefactor, generously donated his support and services to the Church.[1]

Following the assassination of Primate Tourian in 1933 in the Holy Cross Church, his body was temporarily kept at Ferncliff Cemetery in New York. The Archbishop Leon Tourian Committee was concerned with finding a suitable site for the remains of the martyred Archbishop. The Committee was anxious to transport the body to Ēchmiadzin. Ēchmiadzin consented to this proposal at first, but later retracted its initial decision. Ēchmiadzin deemed it more appropriate to bury the Archbishop in the Holy Cross Church where he had been martyred. It was also the wish of the Pontiff that a memorial service blessing the tomb of the Archbishop be held every year.[2]

In compliance with the wishes of the Catholicos, the Diocesan Convention passed a resolution on May 1, 1937 to lay the Primate to rest in the Holy Cross Church. Subsequently a memorial chapel was built adjoining the church vestry. On November 6, 1938, the body of the martyred Archbishop was buried in the chapel with a solemn service for the repose of souls. In 1939 a marble tombstone was erected bearing the following inscription: "Leonce Archbishop Tourian, Primate of Armenians in America. Born 1 January 1879. Martyred 24 December 1933."[1]

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[1] Twentieth Anniversary 1929-1949, Holy Cross Church, New York.

[2] "Herakir Vehaṗ'arh Hayrabedēn" ("Telegram from the Catholicos"), Baikar, June 7, 1934.

In the following years the Church proved too small for the growing community. Thus on November 9, 1952, the old Church was demolished and work was started on the new. The building of the new Church was completed in December 1953, and it was consecrated on October 17, 1954 by Archbishops Mamprē Kalfaian, Diran Nersoyian, and Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian.

Once a growing church community, the Holy Cross Church now has a dwindling membership due to the changing nature of the Washington Heights population. She has lost many of her former members to newly established Armenian Churches in the suburbs of New York.

J. Summary and Conclusion

A retrospective glance at the circumstances surrounding the Tourian assassination strongly suggests the existence of pathological tendencies among American Armenians at the socio-psychological level. Regardless of the identity and affiliation of the assassins, the Archbishop's murder symbolized the tragedy that had befallen a whole people.

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[1] Twentieth Anniversary, Holy Cross Church of Armenia, New York, 1929-1949.

Indeed, the accumulated wisdom of over 25 centuries of continuous national existence was found wanting as a guide to illuminate the way out of the Armenians' chaotic presence on to a new future. Se deep was the chaos of the Armenian present so many were the wounds on the national psyche, that no quick and easy remedy would suffice. Centuries of persecution, capped by three massacres in twenty years, and the loss of Armenian independence, had a cumulative maddening affect upon the Armenians with clear manifestations of collective nihilism. When a portion of this collectivity was placed in the American environment with its freedoms and flexibility, it simply lost its social-psychological bearings by experiencing "culture shock." Thus, the Tourian murder can be regarded as the climax of a whole series of events which seemed to move the Armenians inexorably toward the abyss.

In the midst of heightened emotions and turmoil, Father Kalfaian was elected Locum-Tenens to preside upon a divided flock. Soon help arrived from Ēchmiadzin in the person of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, one of the most eminent Armenian churchmen. Despite the most concerted attempts to achieve unity, the good Archbishop failed; for the conflict among the factions now transcended personalities, friendships and the Tourian affair itself. It had assumed distinctly ideological overtones marked by zealotry, inflexibility and vengefulness.

In the terminology of the strategist, the two sides were playing a zero-sum game, where there would be only one winner and one loser. In such situations no compromise is possible; hence the failure of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's mission to America.

With the coming of the late thirties attention began to be deflected from the factional strife to the gathering clouds over the international firmament. Stalin's infamous Yezhovchine had decimated the elite of Armenia's intellectuals and politicians and claimed the life of Catholicos Khorēn I Mouradpēgian. As the war engulfed the states of Europe, the Armenians of the Soviet Union were called upon to make superhuman sacrifices for the Allied cause. Subsequently, the US-Soviet alliance would change radically the political environment in which the Armenian Church would operate during the war years.

CHAPTER XII

THE END OF AN ERA (1938-1944)

The election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian in 1938 as Primate marked the beginning of an era of gradual recovery, although progress proved to be slow and difficult. After several years of ecclesiastical controversy which sapped the strength of the Armenian community and Church, it was hoped that this election would restore peace and order. Moreover, the new Primate was looked upon as a source of inspiration, and it was anticipated that he would reinstate the authority of the Diocese through well defined objectives and effective programs, attractive to both young and old members of the Church.

The reign of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian witnessed the high-water mark of Armenian faith and ethnic heritage. To tradition bound members of the Armenian community the Primate's election was heartening as a means of preservation of the Armenian spirit in America. Their prime concern was _azkabahbanoum_ or national preservation.[1] The principle of national existence or racial identity was fostered through institutions such as the Church, the Armenian press, the Armenian language schools, and various charitable and compatriotic organizations.

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[1] Editorial, "Goghchounenk' Arhachnort Srpazaně" ("We Welcome the Bishop Primate"), _Baikar_, September 11, 1938.

The new Primate was also conscious of the preservation of these religious and ethnic traditions. His scholastic background prepared him well for his challenge. However, his traditionalism encountered mixed feelings among the people, especially the second generation who often complained of their inability to understand church services which were conducted in Armenian by priests who were ill-equipped for the American setting. The tradition-bound members were determined to cling to their Armenian heritage and to maintain strong ties with the homeland. The second generation, on the other hand, was gradually becoming integrated into the larger American community. The uncompromising attitude of their community and church leaders further widened the gulf between them and made communication even more difficult. Indeed, assimilation was making serious inroads into the Armenian Church and her membership.[1] Archbishop Hovsēp'ian made earnest efforts to appeal to the second generation, but to little avail.

It was only with his successor, Archbishop Diran Nersoyian of London, England, that the Diocese began to identify more closely with the American scene. With the termination of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's primacy in the mid-forties an era in the history of the Armenian Church in America ended.

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[1] Editorial, "Arhachnorti Vawerats'oumě" ("The Confirmation of the Primate"), Baikar, June 8, 1939.

A. Ēchmiadzin and the Soviets: A Period of Relative Tolerance

The Great Purge of 1936-1938 in Armenia was directed against Armenian nationalism. The "cleansing" of the Communist Party, government members, and officials began with the death of its first victim, the Communist Party Secretary, Aghasi Khanjian, in July of 1936. His death was followed by that of hundreds of others, victims from all walks of life. The most frequent charge brought against the Church at this time was that the clergy collaborated in nationalistic plots to overthrow the government.

Soviet officials had become suspicious of Catholicos Khorēn I and doubted his loyalty; therefore, he had to be eliminated. His premature death occurred on April 6, 1938, at his residence in the Monastery of Ēchmiadzin.[1]

Patriarch Torkom Koushagian of Jerusalem was the first to be informed of the death of Catholicos Khorēn. In a telegram despatched from Ēchmiadzin on April 11, 1938, he was told that the Catholicos had suffered a severe heart attack on the night of April 6, 1938 and was unable to receive immediate medical attention. The cablegram was signed by the Deputy Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Kēork Ch'ēorēk'jian.[1] Patriarch Koushagian acted upon this message and wired thirty Dioceses throughout the world, including the American Diocese, of the death of the Catholicos.[2] He also sent a telegram to the Deputy Locum-Tenens expressing his condolences and requesting additional details concerning the death of the Catholicos. No reply was received from Ēchmiadzin, however, until April 23, when a telegram verified the accuracy of the official government medical bulletin concerning the cause of death. The cable also disclosed that, on the basis of a Pontifical will, an encyclical dated April 18, 1936, designated Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian as Deputy Locum-Tenens. The Diocese was notified of these events in a letter dated May 24, 1938.[3]

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[1] A.J. Arberry, ed., Religion in the Middle East (Cambridge University Press; 1969); Vahe A. Sarafian, "The Soviet and the Armenian Church," Armenian Review, VIII (June, 1955), p. 97; Dzovets'i (pseud.), "Nor Vgayout'iwnner Gatoghigosi Sbanout'ean Masin" ("New Testimonies Concerning the Murder of the

The news of the death of the Catholicos surprised and shocked Armenians of the diaspora. While one segment of Armenians did not question the circumstances surrounding the death of the Catholicos and the designation of Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian as Deputy Locum-Tenens, the Tashnag press became singularly critical of those Armenians and high-ranking clergymen who wished to remain silent with respect to the

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Catholicos"), Hairenik, May 22, 1938.

[1] Editorial, "Deghegadouagan Nōt'er" ("Reportable Notes"), Sion, XII (May, 1938), p. 138.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Namag Gat'oghigosagan Deghagalēn" ("Letter from the Deputy Locum-Tenens"), Baikar, July 26, 1938.

situation in Ēchmiadzin.[1] The Tashnag view was based on information received through hundreds of refugees from Armenia and the Soviet Union. Archbishop Melik'-Tankian of Tehran, Iran, interviewed hundreds of refugees, both Armenian and other nationals, even Turks, to get the truth of the situation.[2]

Allegedly, his investigations revealed that the government had demanded from the Catholicos the sum of forty thousand rubles as tax. The Catholicos replied to government officials that he was unable to meet these demands due to the lack of funds at Ēchmiadzin. He requested additional time to obtain the necessary funds from Armenians abroad. The Cheka denied his request, however, and insisted that the Catholicos relinquish the treasures of the Church. The Catholicos adamantly refused.

Thus it was that, shortly after midnight on April 6, a group of NKVD agents allegedly arrived at the Monastery and proceeded to the residence of the Catholicos. They were denied entrance by the personal servant to the Catholicos. The commotion awoke the Catholicos, who quickly dressed and took with him the keys to the museum vault. Meanwhile, the Secret Service agents had already broken into his residence and met the Catholicos in the reception hall. In the ensuing confrontation, the agents forced the Catholicos to surrender the keys to the museum and treasure vault of the Cathedral. When the Catholicos resisted, the agents encircled him and seized the keys, turning deaf ears to his pleas for help. In the fight the agents brutally choked him to death, leaving his body on the ground. From there they rushed to the Cathedral, where they emptied the vault of its contents, and taking the stolen treasures they fled to their headquarters in Erevan.

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[1] Dzovets'i, "Nor Vgayout'iwnner Gat'oghigosi Sbanout'ean Masin" Hairenik, May 22, 1938.

[2] Ibid.; Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, p. 52.

After the crime the members of the Ēchmiadzin Brotherhood remained secluded in their cells, according to reports. For three days the body of the martyred Catholicos remained unattended on the floor of the reception hall. No one dared approach the body, not even a member of the Supreme Spiritual Council. Finally the body of the Catholicos was laid to rest unceremoniously on the fourth day in a hastily dug grave in the courtyard of the Monastery by six faithful Armenian nuns.[1] The murder of the Catholicos did not become general knowledge. The authorities simply reported it as death by natural causes. Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian was forced to sign the death certificate.

The premature death of the Pontiff caused a deep sense of loss and bewilderment among Armenians in America and the world over. Significant among such expressions was an editorial entitled "The Great Mourning" in the Sion, monthly magazine of the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem. The editorial reflected upon the aura of mystery surrounding the death of the Catholicos and cast doubt upon the accuracy of the official reports of the circumstances of his death and burial.[1]

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[1] Armenian National Apostolic Church of America, Crisis in the Armenian Church, p. 52; "Nor Vgayout'iwnner Gat'oghigosi Sbanout'ean Masin," Hairenik, May 22, 1938.

The death of Catholicos Khorēn was a great loss for the Armenian Church. He possessed a profound perception of the political situation in Armenia and had carefully maneuvered Soviet authorities into adopting a less severe attitude toward the Armenian Church. The Tashnag Party, however, was reluctant to subscribe to the validity of this argument. Instead, it was their belief that the Catholicos was simply a weak and ineffective person with regard to the rights and integrity of the Church. They regarded him only as an instrument in the hands of the Soviets.[2]

A forty-day mourning period was proclaimed in the Diocese by the Locum-Tenens Archbishop Kalfaian. The Pontiff's death was observed during church services throughout America and the world. In America he was best remembered for his role as Plenipotentiary in 1920, at which time he opened the doors of understanding between the supporters of Father Arsēn Vehouni and those of the Locum-Tenens Father Shahē Kasbarian.

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[1] Patriarch Torkom Koushagian, "Medz Soukě" ("The Great Mourning"), Sion, XII (May, 1938), pp. 131-133.

[2] Editorial, "Khorēn Gatoghigosi Mahouan Arht'iw" ("On the Occasion of the Death of Khorēn I Catholicos") Hairenik, April 15, 1938.

The death of the Pontiff marked the climax of the anti-religious campaign in Soviet Armenia. The renewed attack on the Church resulted in the imprisonment and deportation of numerous priests and their families, and the confiscation of hundreds of churches and shrines.

After the death of Khorēn I, Archbishop Kēork Ch'ēōrēk'-jian assumed office as Deghagal (Deputy) Locum-Tenens.[1] He was seventy years old at the time and had experienced harsh treatment by the Soviets; however, the policy he pursued as Deputy Locum-Tenens was one of loyalty to the Soviet government of Armenia. The Tashnag press could not justify his attitude and regarded him as a puppet of the Communist regime.[2] Much controversy centered upon a Catholicossal encyclical allegedly issued by the late Catholicos Khorēn I which was made public by the Supreme Spiritual Council in July of 1938. The encyclical, dated April 18, 1936, revealed that Catholicos Khorēn had designated Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian as Deputy Locum-Tenens, to succeed him upon his death. The validity of this encyclical was verified by the Supreme Spiritual Council.[1]

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[1] Father Zawēn Ch'inch'inian, "Eranashnorh Dēr Dēr Kēork VI Hayrabed" ("His Holiness Kēork VI Catholicos-Patriarch"), Sion, XXVIII (June, 1955), pp. 154-156; Editorial, "Gensakragan Agnarg" ("Biographical Sketch"), Sion, XIX (June-August, 1946), pp. 70-71.

[2] Kolarz, Religion in the Soviet Union, p. 157.

The Tashnag Party immediately contested the authenticity of the encyclical and claimed it was a forgery by the Cheka in an attempt to mislead Armenians.[2] Archbishop Hovsēp'ian responded to the critics and denied incriminations against Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian as a traitor or agent of the Cheka. Furthermore, he claimed, the designation of Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian as Locum-Tenens by the Catholicos was in accord with centuries-long traditions of the Church.[3] This issue remained in the fore for some time, however, and continued to incite further conflict.

Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian manifested only civic loyalty to the Soviet government and not ideological rapproachment as suggested by the Tashnag press. As the Second World War approached and with the German attack on the U.S.S.R. on June 22, 1941, the situation changed in Armenia, and Soviet policy was more tolerant toward religion in general.[4] From the start of the War the leaders of the Church and Ēchmiadzin supported the Soviet Union. Prayers were offered in churches for the safety of the fighting men and for the defeat of the Axis Powers. Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian earnestly supported the war effort, as did his counterparts in the Russian Orthodox Church.

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[1] "Khorēn A. Gatoghogigosi Deghagal Nshanagogh Gontage" ("The Encyclical of Khorēn I"), Baikar, July 24, 1938.

[2] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Gatoughigosagan Deghagali Antsi Ew Bashdōni Shourche Andeghi Ew Anhimn Aghmoug" ("Unfounded Rumors About the Person and Office of the Deputy Locum-Tenens"), Hairenik, September 16, 1938.

[3] Ibid.

[4] After signing a non-agresssion pact with the Soviet Union, Hitler launched an invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. The British and French came to the defense of Poland and the Second World War started.

At the outbreak of the war it was reported that certain Armenian communities and priests in the war zones in the Ukraine, Kiev, Kharkov, and Crimea befriended the Germans, regarding them as their liberators from Soviet rule. The Church, however, remained loyal to the Soviet government.[1]

The Tashnag Party was caught in an internal conflict. One segment held a solicitous attitude toward Nazism and their anti-Communist obsession based upon the Nazi promise for a free and independent Armenia under a German mandate.

> The other segment hated Nazism and feared the consequences of liberation by the Germans. At the same time, the hope lingered that somehow the war might weaken the Soviet Union sufficiently to allow the emergence of a free Armenia.[2]

On December 15, 1942, the Armenian National Council was organized in Berlin under the patronage of the Ministry of the Eastern Occupied Areas. The Council was comprised of prominent Tashnag leaders, among them Professor Ardashēs Abeghian, Karekin Njteh, and Trō Ganaian. The Council appealed to Alfred Rosenberg, Nazi Minister of Eastern Occupied Areas, to make Soviet Armenia a German colony.[1] Tashnag political adventurism was strongly criticized by their opponents and was labeled as being politically bankrupt and morally corrupt. Tashnag opponents feared the consequences if Nazi hordes reached Armenia and liquidated Armenian families whose sons and husbands were fighting in the ranks of the Red Army.

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[1] Kolarz, p. 160; Roy, p. 411; Mattosian, p. 194.

[2] Roy, p. 410.

An editorial in the Armenian Mirror Spectator, entitled "Incorrigibles," harshly criticized the Tashnags.

> No, these leaders and their blind followers can never be the liberators of the Armenian people. Their fratricidal terrorism, their fanatical and obtuse stupidity and incurable political opportunism have turned them into grave diggers of the remnants of a people. They conspired with the Nazis in the darkest and most critical period in the history of our people as they had schemed and plotted in the past with the Tatar Musawatists, Georgian Mensheviks, with the Turks and the Kurds against Soviet Russia knowing too well that the plot was also aimed against Soviet Armenia.[2]

As the Church and her leadership intensified their loyalty to the Soviet government, anti-religious propaganda in Armenia subsided. Throughout the war against Germany there were no anti-religious demonstrations to speak of. On the contrary, cordial relations between Ēchmiadzin and the Kremlin existed. This cordiality was manifested in many ways. Sunday was again recognized as a holiday on which the faithful were allowed to attend Church. Permission was granted to convene an all Armenian National Ecclesiastical Assembly in 1940 in which delegates from dioceses in the diaspora were invited to participate for the election of a new Catholicos. The American Diocese was notified of this Assembly on September 20, 1940, by the Supreme Spiritual Council in Ēchmiadzin and was requested to send five delegates.[1] Another telegram, dated December 12, 1940, from Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian informed the Diocese that the Assembly was scheduled for April 10, 1941.[2] The Assembly convened from April 10-13, 1941, but did not elect a new Catholicos as expected.

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[1] "Document Reveals Tashnag Collaboration with Nazis," The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, September 1, 1945, p. 1.

[2] Editorial, "Incorrigibles," The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, September 1, 1945, p. 2.

The following reasons were offered for the postponement of the Catholicossal election:

> 1. Wartime difficulties and restrictions on travel which deterred a large number of delegates from risking the journey to Armenia.
>
> 2. The lack of a sufficient number of high-ranking clergymen to consecrate a Catholicos in accordance with age-old traditions of the Armenian Church.
>
> 3. The lack of a quorum present on the appointed date, April 10, 1941. Only 49 of the 92 delegates were present.

Consequently, the Assembly merely confirmed the Archbishop as Deputy Locum-Tenens.[3] At the conclusion of the conference a statement was issued praising the Russian political leaders for their farsightedness and for maintaining peace in the world.[1]

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[1] "Hay Egeghets'agan Geank'" ("Armenian Ecclesiastical Life"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, II (September, 1940), p. 17.

[2] Ibid., December, 1940, p. 75.

[3] "Badjēnner" ("The Minutes of the Sessions of the Conference"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, III (December, 1941), p. 73.

Late in 1942 religious tolerance was generally acknowledged in Armenia, and prayers for Soviet victory were raised. Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian expressed gratitude to the government for its solicitude for the needs of the Church. In a message on September 20, 1942, the Archbishop urged Armenians of the world to unite in combatting Hitlerism. His message, entitled "An Appeal to All Armenians," praised the Armenians of America for their friendship and good relations with the homeland and attacked those who collaborated with the enemy and betrayed the fatherland. The message concluded by stressing the need for unity among Armenians against the common foe and the need for support of the Soviet regime which was the God-given protector of the law.[2]

Throughout the duration of the war the Armenian Church continued to serve the nation. On January 24, 1943, Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian wired Generalissimo Joseph Stalin that the Armenian faithful in America and elsewhere were raising funds for the "Sasounts'i Tavit' Tank Column". He reported that Ēchmiadzin was donating nearly one million rubles for the building of planes and tanks. Stalin's response praised the clergy for their deep loyalty to country and government.[1]

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 79.

[2] "Hay Egeghets'agan Ew Azkayin Geank'" ("Armenian National and Ecclesiastical Life"), _Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy_, IV (February, 1943), pp. 193-194.

Harmony between Church and government was further evidenced by the formation of a Council for the Affairs of the Armenian Church on November 14, 1943. This Council served as adjunct to the Council of Ministers of Soviet Armenia.[2] Its functions were to ensure harmonious relations between church and state, to oversee the opening of new churches, to arrange for theological institutions, and to draft legislation relating to the Church. One outgrowth of these endeavors in January of 1944 was the revival of the official publication of Ēchmiadzin, *Ararat*, under the name of *Ēchmiadzin*.[3]

At the conclusion of the war, church administration was normalized, and it was deemed possible by the Supreme Spiritual Council to convene a National Ecclesiastical Assembly for the election of a new Catholicos. The only candidate for the office was the Deputy Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian. On April 19, 1945, he was received by

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[1] *Ibid.*, *Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy*, IV (March, 1943), p. 217.

[2] Mattosian, p. 194; "Hayasdan" ("Armenia"), *Hayasdanyaitz Yegehetzy*, VII (January, 1945), p. 30.

[3] Editorial, "Ēchmiadzin Bashdōnat'ert'ě" ("The Ēchmiadzin Periodical"), *The Gotchnag*, July 8, 1944, pp. 651-652.

Premier Joseph Stalin at the Kremlin.[1] Prior to his meeting with Stalin, the Catholicos met with President Ivan Vassilierich Polyanzky of the Council for Affairs for Religious Cults to discuss matters affecting the Armenian Church. President Polyanzky later participated in the conversations between Stalin and the Catholicos.[2]

This visit was significant in that it took place upon the eve of the fall of Berlin and shortly before the collapse of Germany in May of 1945. No official record of the meeting is available, but all indications were that the relations between Church and government were cordial. It was expected that the Locum-Tenens would remain loyal to the Soviet government when elected Catholicos. In return, Ēchmiadzin was to be the recipient of a number of concessions by the government in order to consolidate her authority at home and abroad.

The visit to Stalin was beneficial in several ways. Among these were the reissuance of the church magazine, the convening of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, the reopening of the theological seminary at Ēchmiadzin, and the recovery of a number of churches. All these concessions were made public and official by the decree of Stalin.[3]

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[1] Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union*, p. 160.

[2] Kēork Ch'ēōrēk'jian, "Zegouts'oum Sourp Ēchmiadzin Partsrakoyn Hȯkewor Ishkhanout'ean Ir K'arhameay Kordzounēout'ean Masin, 1941-1945," ("Four-Year Report of Activities, Submitted to the Supreme Spiritual Council"), *Hayasdanyaitz Yegehetzy*, VII (June, 1945), p. 145.

[3] Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union*, p. 160.

Two months after the meeting with Stalin, on June 16, 1945, the National Ecclesiastical Assembly was inaugurated and presided over by His Holiness Karekin Hovsēp'ian of Cilicia. It remained in session until June 25.[1] Participating in the Assembly and the ceremony of anointment and enthronement were Patriarch-elect Giwregh of Jerusalem, Archbishop Kēork Arslanian, acting Patriarch of Constantinople, and other high ranking churchmen. The Soviet government was represented by Ivan Polyanzky and the Armenian Republic by Sourēn Nersēsi Hovhannēsian, President of the Armenian Council for Affairs of the Armenian Church.[2] Nearly all the major Armenian colonies throughout the world were represented. A total of 111 delegates were present, five from the United States. On June 22 Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian was elected Catholicos Kēork VI by a vote of 110 to 1. The only dissenting vote was his own.[3]

Ivan B. Polyanzky greeted the assemblage and conveyed the blessings of the government. He praised the Church and its leaders for their patriotic services to the fatherland and paid tribute to the Armenian Church in the following words:

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[1] "Ēndrout'iwn Tserhnatrout'iwn Ew Odzoum Amenayn Hayots' Vehaparh Hayrabedi Dēr Dēr Kēork VI Srpaznakoyn Gat'oghigosi" ("Election, Consecration, and Annointment of His Holiness Kēork VI, Catholicos of All Armenians"), Sion XIX (August, 1945), p. 77.

[2] Terenig P'ōladian, "Ngarakrout'iwn Sourp Ēchmiadzin Koumarouadz Azkayin Egeghets'agan Zhoghovi" ("Description of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly of Holy Ēchmiadzin"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, VII (October, 1945), pp. 290-300.

[3] "Gevorg Cheorekjian Consecrated Catholicos of All Armenians," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, July 28, 1945, p. 1.

> From the very beginning of the Armenian nation, this people, which has seen so many failures, has suffered so much, the Armenian Church has always stood by the people, has helped to revive its national autonomy, has reared its children in national consciousness and contributed to the nation's cultural advancement.[1]

The Assembly responded to the solicitousness of Stalin with a message full of praise. The newly-elected Catholicos credited Stalin as the "liberator of the Armenian people and the leader who realized the rebirth of the Armenian States."[2]

On June 22, 1945, Catholicos Kēork VI was enthroned in elaborate ceremonies at Ēchmiadzin Cathedral by His Holiness Karekin Hovsēp'ian, Catholicos of Cilicia. The rites were attended by representatives of the Armenian and Russian governments and by clergy and laity. Ten new bishops were ordained. Among them was The Right Reverend Diran Nersoian, the American Primate.

Although the Armenian Church made substantial gains during the War because of the benevolent attitudes of the Soviet regime, there remained many signs of weakness in the Church. Few young people and only a fraction of the adults attended church. There was a shortage of priests and very few candidates for the priesthood. In his report to the

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[1] Kolarz, Religion in the Soviet Union, p. 162.

[2] Terenig P'ōladian, "Ngarakrout'iwn Sourp Ēchmiadzin Koumarouadz Azkayin Egeghets'agan Zhoghovi," Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, (October, 1945), p. 299.

Assembly, Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian noted that in 1943 the brotherhood of Ēchmiadzin had only two members in residence and in 1945 this number rose to eleven.[1] Tolerance by the Soviet regime toward religion and the Armenian Church did not necessarily mean any basic reversal of the traditional attitude of Marxist hostility to religion. It is probable that this apparent reversal was prompted by Soviet belief that the Church enjoyed such popular support as to make her a valuable asset during the national emergency.

Succeeding years showed that religion was still essentially not compatible to socialism and communism. Social leaders felt the necessity to conduct an anti-religious campaign directed especially at the younger generation and concentrating on propaganda.

B. The Election of the Primate: Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian

Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian was still in office as Locum-Tenens when the Diocesan Convention of September 3-4, 1938, elected Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian as the new Primate. His election was welcomed, especially since it came so soon after the tragedy of Archbishop Tourian's death. Community and Church leaders hoped that, as Primate, the Archbishop would provide wise leadership and direct the energies of the people into constructive channels. However, this was not to be so for some time. Ēchmiadzin was reluctant to confirm the election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, and it was only after eight months that his election was confirmed.

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[1] The report is not clear as to whether these men were ordained priests or were simply brothers residing at the Monastery of Ēchmiadzin.

Prior to the Diocesan Convention of September, 1938, a Fresno Armenian paper, Nor Or, reported on August 26, 1938, that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was about to terminate his itinerary in America and return to Ēchmiadzin. The article also revealed that Deputy Locum-Tenens Ch'ēōrēk'jian in Ēchmiadzin deemed Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's presence in the Holy See essential and that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian had replied to Ēchmiadzin's request before undertaking his journey.[1]

On September 3, the opening day of the Diocesan Convention, an editorial in the Baikar reflected that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's departure from America was deeply regretted by the people and that he definitely would have been elected Primate had he not been called to Ēchmiadzin.[2] The agenda of the Convention did not include the election of a Primate. The Central Executive Committee who urged the delegates to postpone the election did so for the following reasons:

> 1. Because of the lack of time and due to unforseen circumstances, the Central Executive Committee was unable to present a slate of candidates for the election.
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> 2. Because of the sudden death of the Catholicos, ecclesiastical affairs in Ēchmiadzin were at a stalemate.

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[1] "Badouirag Srpazanĕ Bidi Megni" ("The Plenipotentiary Bishop will Depart"), Baikar, September 2, 1938.

[2] Editorial, "Amerigahay Arhachnorti Endrout'iwnĕ" ("The Election of the Primate"), Baikar, September 3, 1938.

> Thus, the granting of a confirmation for the Primate would pose difficulties.
>
> 3. The recent improvement of relations between Ēchmiadzin and the See of Cilicia might be beneficial to the American Diocese in that she could procure pastors for the churches in America.
>
> 4. The election of a new Primate would prove to be economically unwise at this time because there was a scarcity of Diocesan funds.[1]

This resolution generated heated debate among the delegates who considered the decision of the Central Executive Committee unacceptable. Yielding to the wishes of the majority, the Chair proceeded with the election of a Primate. A Nominating Committee was appointed which submitted a slate of three candidates. Voting was by secret ballot, and during the fourth session of the Convention on September 3, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was elected Primate by a majority vote.[2] In his acceptance speech Archbishop Hovsēp'ian expressed gratitude for the confidence entrusted in him. He pledged to fulfill the challenging tasks of his high office if his election were confirmed by the Holy See.[3]

The news of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's election was cabled to Ēchmiadzin by the Central Executive Committee on September 7, 1938, and the confirmation of his election was also requested.[1] While Armenians in America were pleased with the outcome of the election, Ēchmiadzin was reluctant to extend her confirmation. Consequently, on November 15 Ēchmiadzin wired Archbishop Hovsēp'ian to immediately depart for Paris.[2] On November 16 Archbishop Hovsēp'ian and the Central Executive Committee appealed to Ēchmiadzin to reconsider her decision. It was not until two months later, however, that Ēchmiadzin responded to inform them that arrangements had been made for the Archbishop to return to Ēchmiadzin by way of Paris. The cablegram added that an explanatory letter addressed to both the Chair of the Diocesan Convention and the Central Executive Committee was forthcoming.[3]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, September 1938, pp. 82-83.

[2] Ibid., p. 104.

[3] Ibid., p. 106.

At a regular meeting of the Central Executive Committee in November, Ēchmiadzin's refusal was discussed. The members of the committee were distressed at the attitude Ēchmiadzin had adopted in disregarding the needs of the Diocese. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian observed that, after the untimely death of Catholicos Khorēn I on April 6, 1938, his own presence in the diaspora would be more beneficial for Ēchmiadzin. He also noted that it was for this reason that he had consented to submit his candidacy for Primate. Ēchmiadzin's feelings on the matter were obvious as indicated by her order that he proceed to Paris. The Archbishop announced that he had decided to leave the United States in early December unless the situation were altered.[1]

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[1] Central Executive Committee, "Amerigahay Geank'," ("American-Armenian Life), The Gotchnag, September 17, 1938, p. 906.

[2] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, April 16, 1939, p. 117.

[3] Ibid., p. 118.

When the news of these events became public, Ēchmiadzin's refusal to grant confirmation was viewed with deeper regret by the faithful.[2] Diocesan circles challenged the wisdom and legality of the Ēchmiadzin decision which they regarded as negligence of the needs and aspirations of the Armenians of America.

The partisan press also took sides in the issue. An editorial in the *Baikar*, dated February 16, 1939, and entitled "A Denied Confirmation," commented that the election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian would have been beneficial and advantageous to the restoration and normalization of the authority of the Mother See and churches throughout the world. The Archbishop would have served as a bridge between Armenians at home and abroad. The editorial concluded by stating that, until the causes for denial were proven to be just and legitimate, Ēchmiadzin had made a grave mistake and her decision was against the best interests of the Diocese in the United States.[3]

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[1] *Ibid*.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 112.

[3] Editorial, "Merzhouads Vawerats'oum Mě" ("A Denied Confirmation"), *Baikar*, February 16, 1939; E. Mesiaian, "Amerigahay Egeghits'in Arhants' Arhachnorti" ("Armenian Church Without a Primate"), *Baikar*, March 1, 1939.

On the other hand, the Tashnag press accused Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian, the Deputy Locum-Tenens, of unnecessarily meddling in the Armenian Church in the United States and of being a usurper. In view of growing criticism against Ēchmiadzin, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian urged the need for a disciplined and filial attitude toward Ēchmiadzin. The Central Executive Committee, faced with uncertainty, pleaded with Ēchmiadzin to reconsider her decision.

At this time the people's reaction was expressed by the formation of "Popular Committees" in nearly every Armenian community. Their intent was to persuade Ēchmiadzin to reverse her decision. They demanded that the Central Executive Committee become aware of this matter and act with firmness and persistence.[1]

Ēchmiadzin's silence also brought about a reaction among the Hierarchical Sees which intervened on behalf of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian. They deplored Ēchmiadzin's policy toward one of her most worthy and noted sons. One example of this reaction appeared in an editorial entitled, "The Plenipotentiary Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian, Primate of the Armenians of America," in Sion, the periodical of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The editorial commented that, although Ēchmiadzin preferred to remain silent in regard to the election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, she was adamant about his departure from America.[1] The editorial continued to point out that church governing bodies in America must pursue this matter until they succeeded because a Primate of the stature of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian would not only benefit the Armenians of America, but would also bring credit to the Mother See in Ēchmiadzin.[2]

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, April 16, 1939, p. 112.

On January 25, 1939, the Central Executive Committee sent a telegram to Ēchmiadzin, pleading that the Deputy Locum-Tenens reconsider their request for a confirmation since it represented the feelings of thousands of faithful. His election, they wrote, would contribute to the integrity of the supreme authority of Ēchmiadzin. They also requested that the Archbishop be allowed to postpone his departure from America until the cable was answered.[3] Ēchmiadzin reiterated that it was imperative for Archbishop Hovsēp'ian to depart for Paris and be subject to the orders of the Supreme Spiritual Council.

Neither side was ready for compromise. Ēchmiadzin now considered Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's actions in open defiance against the authority of the Supreme Spiritual Council and the Deputy Locum-Tenens. The Tashnag and Communist presses also joined forces with Ēchmiadzin in criticizing Archbishop

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[1] Editorial, "Nouirag Karekin Ark'ebisgobos Arhachnort Amerigahayots'" ("The Plenipotentiary, Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian, Primate of the Armenians of America") Sion, XIII (January, 1940), p. 4.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, April 16, 1939, p. 119.

Hovsēp'ian. They labeled him "the greatest rebel."[1]

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian replied to his critics and stated his position in an article entitled, "On the Occasion of Being Elected to the Primacy of America." In this article Archbishop Hovsēp'ian stated his reasons for variance with Ēchmiadzin.

> If I consent to accept the office of Primacy, even on a temporary basis, it will be for valid reasons. America is one of the major Armenian colonies of the diaspora and is in need of reorganization. It is necessary to create here a national and ecclesiastical life and climate by which she will become a bridge between other colonies and the homeland. Even if Ēchmiadzin remains adamant in her refusal to grant confirmation to the election, my conscience and principles will not allow me to rebel against the Central Spiritual Council of which I am a member. It is our duty and right to voice our views in the vital issues which concern the well-being of the Mother See. The final decision rests with the Mother See. In the meantime, we ask clarification of Ēchmiadzin in view of her decision. This we ask only in the spirit of filial responsibility and not dissension. It is my conviction that under the present circumstances it is not wise to depart from America. If Ēchmiadzin heeds my voice it is for the best, and if she does not, I must comply with her wishes, having fulfilled my duties and leaving the rest to God. Without Ēchmiadzin's confirmation of the election, I will not assume the office of Primate whatsoever.[2]

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[1] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Amerigayi Arhachnort Ĕndrelou Arhtiw" ("On the Occasion of Being Elected to the Primacy of America"), The Gotchnag, April 15, 1939, p. 316.

[2] When it was learned that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was ordered by Ēchmiadzin to leave the country in the latter part of 1939, the Chairman of the Diocesan Convention, Mr. Dickran Boyajian, urged him to remain as Primate of the United States since his contributions would be more beneficial here than in Ēchmiadzin. The Archbishop replied that his services in this country could only be rendered after confirmation and blessings from Ēchmiadzin were received. Mr. Boyajian has provided the copies of the letters exchanged between them. Personal Letters, Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian to Dickran Boyajian, Watertown, Mass.; Hovsēp'ian, "Amerigayi Arhachnort Endrelou Khntri Arhtiw" The Gotchnag, April 15, 1939, p. 361.

The people of the American Diocese had come to realize that they must reorganize and strengthen themselves under the aegis of a learned and capable spiritual leader. To community minded leaders and the populace the problems of Ēchmiadzin were obscured by the more pressing and immediate needs of the American Diocese. One such problem of immediate concern arose with the resignation of Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian as Locum-Tenens.

C. The New Locum-Tenens: Father Sion Manougian (March 1, 1939-May 9, 1939)

For some time Archbishop Kalfaian had indicated his desire to resign from office. Whatever his reasons for resignation, he fulfilled his responsibilities as Locum-Tenens in one of the stormiest periods in the history of the Armenian community and Church in America. Except for the tense period during the trial of the Archbishop Tourian case, he provided the church with orderly leadership.

Archbishop Kalfaian tendered his resignation in writing on March 1, 1939. It was accepted by the Central Executive Committee at a meeting held on March 9, in its New York office.[1]

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[1] After his resignation Bishop Kalfaian accepted the pastorate of Saint Leon's Church in Paterson, New Jersey. He served the Western Diocese as Primate from 1942-1946. His second term as Primate of the Eastern Diocese (1954-1958) coincided with another crisis which resulted from the usurpation of the Catholicate of Cilicia, which admitted the dissident Armenian Churches of America to its jurisdiction. This deepened the division caused by the assassination of Archbishop Tourian.

At this meeting the Committee elected Father Sion Manougian, pastor of the Holy Translators Church in Providence, Rhode Island, as Locum-Tenens and wired Ēchmiadzin for confirmation. Reply was received on March 26; Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian confirmed Father Manougian's election and, accordingly, he assumed the leadership of the Armenian Church in America.[1] Concurrently, he served as pastor of the Providence Church.

Father Manougian was born in 1906 in a small village, Giwrashen, in the province of Vasbouragan in the eastern sector of Turkey. He was left an orphan as a small child and in 1921, along with 850 other orphans, he was placed in an orphanage in Jerusalem. He enrolled as a student in St. James Seminary in Jerusalem in 1923 and was ordained into the priesthood in 1930. For the next eight years he held administrative posts in the Monastery until he was invited by Bishop Kalfaian in 1938 to serve in the Providence parish.[2]

Father Manougian was consecrated Bishop in 1945 by Catholicos Kēork VI at Ēchmiadzin. From 1946-1952 Bishop Manougian served in Detroit and over parishes of the Middle

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[1] *Adenakrout'iwn*, New York, April 16, 1939, p. 120.

[2] By virtue of his humility, sagacity and wide experience, first as a parish priest and later as Primate of both Dioceses of North and South America, Archbishop Manougian provided effective spiritual leadership to the Armenian Church. He is credited with the authorship of thirteen treatises dealing with religious themes. Two of these provide biographical data: *Egeghets'agani Mě Geank'i Hankrouannerě* ("The Sequences of the Life of a Churchman")(Beirut, Lebanon: G. Doniguian & Sons, 1968), and *Nor Ashkharhēn Hin Ashkharh* ("From the New World to the Old)(Beirut: G. Doniguian & Sons, 1973).

West, first as pastor of Saint John Church in Detroit, and later as Vicar General of the Diocesan Primate in that area.

Following the election of Archbishop Karekin Khach'adourian of South America as Patriarch of Istanbul in 1950, Catholicos Kēork VI appointed Bishop Manougian as Apostolic Delegate to the South American Diocese of the Armenian Church in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Bishop Manougian left Detroit for his new post in October, 1952. He was made an Archbishop by Catholicos Vaskēn I in 1955.

On November 16, 1959, the Diocesan Convention of the North American Diocese elected Archbishop Sion Manougian as Primate. On January 13, 1959, Archbishop Manougian arrived in New York and assumed the office of Primate. During his tenure in office the construction of the Cathedral and Cultural Center in New York was begun. In addition thirteen new churches were built and more than thirteen parish and school buildings were erected.

Archbishop Manougian has authored more than a dozen religious books concerning the history, doctrine and discipline of the Armenian Church.[1] A tradition-bound man of gentle and peaceful nature, he provided leadership to a large Diocese in a time of rapid change. He avoided useless controversy and made his seven and one-half year term of office an incumbency of relative calm and progress.

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[1] Among his works are: *The Armenian Church and its Doctrine* (Detroit, 1951); *Krisdonēagan Vartabedout'iwn* , ("The Christian Doctrine") (Buenos Aires, 1954); *Lousashogh Tēmk'er* ("Luminous Figures") (Boston: Baikar Press, 1949). For information about Primate Manougian see "Primate Elected," *Armenian Guardian*, XII, (December, 1958), p. 5; "Our Primate," *Armenian Guardian*, XIII, (April, 1959), pp. 8-9.

It was not easy for Father Manougian to provide leadership to a Diocese which was plagued with a number of obstacles, foremost among which was the denial of confirmation of its Primate. One month after assuming office, on April 16, 1939, Father Manougian presided at an extraordinary Diocesan Convention held in the Holy Cross Church in New York. The sole purpose of the Convention was to appeal to Ēchmiadzin once again for confirmation.

Before the proceedings began the Chair was presented with petitions bearing thousands of names demanding the confirmation of the Primate-elect.[1] The delegates stressed the positive gains to be obtained through the leadership of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian. They felt his guidance would benefit the welfare of the Church and would advance spiritual goals. They considered Ēchmiadzin's uncompromising and authoritarian position contrary to the democratic ideas and ecclesiastical structure of the Church.[2] The Convention finally resolved to make a final appeal to Ēchmiadzin requesting confirmation of the Primacy of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, at least on a temporary basis, "... in order to permit him to reorganize the affairs of the Diocese and to strengthen ties between the Holy See and Armenian colonies throughout the world."[1]

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[1] Editorial, "Verchin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghově" ("The Last Diocesan Convention"), The Gotchnag, April 29, 1939, p. 399.

[2] V. S. Malkhasian, "Amerigahay Geank'" ("Armenian-America Life"), Baikar, April 26, 1939; Editorial, "Verchin Eresp'pkhanagan Zhoghově," The Gotchnag, April 29, 1939, p. 399.

This latest appeal from the Convention in New York was answered promptly by Ēchmiadzin which confirmed the Primate's election on a temporary basis, on April 25, 1939. The cablegram informed the Diocese that an official letter confirming the "temporary" Primacy of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was in the mail.[2]

According to a communication released from the Diocesan office on June 5, 1939, and signed by Father Sion Manougian, it was disclosed that a written confirmation of the Primacy of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was received on May 5, 1939, from Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian in Ēchmiadzin.[3]

D. Spiritual and Cultural Surge

The Diocesan organization which Archbishop Hovsēp'ian inherited in May, 1939, was heavily ridden with heavy financial difficulties.[4] He introduced a dollar-per-person annual assessment plan which replenished the Diocesan treasury to some extent. His parish visitations and settlement of troublesome affairs after the assassination of Primate Tourian helped to contribute to the peaceful reorganization of the religious life of the faithful. His scholarly leanings were best expressed in the implementation of public lecture series, forums, concerts, and cultural gatherings. He sought to revive interest in the heritage of the Armenians by fostering language, religion, history, and folk art. As a result, his term in office witnessed a surge that was characterized by spiritual and cultural zeal and activities.

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[1] Adenakrout'iwn, New York, April 16, 1939, p. 120.

[2] "Amerigahay Geank'" ("American-Armenian Life"), The Gotchnag, May 6, 1939, p. 439.

[3] "Prelateship of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian Confirmed," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, June 14, 1939, p. 1.

[4] "Arhachnortagan T'emi Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovner" ("Diocesan Conventions of the Diocese") New York, September 27-

1. Lousaworch'i Louma (Mite for the Illuminator)

The Holy See at Ēchmiadzin was a major area of concern for Archbishop Hovsēp'ian. The Monastery was deprived of her financial resources by the taxation imposed upon it by the government. After he arrived in the United States, the Archbishop was anxious to solicit funds for Ēchmiadzin. In 1937 the Diocesan Convention adopted a resolution to form a Lousaworch'i Loumayi Hantsnakhoump (Mite for the Illuminator Committee).[1] Archbishop Hovsēp'ian displayed his fund raising abilities during the campaign and was successful in inspiring

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28, 1941; Providence, November 7-8, 1942; Worcester, October 2-3, 1943; New York, January 29-30, 1944 (typed material). New York, September 21-22, 1940, p. 26.

[1] Adenakrout'iwn, September 3-4, 1938, pp. 80, 95.

the public to donate generously in spite of the Depression. A total of $35,000 was collected for the renovation and restoration of the Cathedral and Monastery of Ēchmiadzin. Every church in the United States carried a contribution box marked "Ēchmiadzin Fund" or *Lousaworch'i Louma*.

2. *Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzi* (Armenian Church)

In October, 1939, the Diocese issued its first official semi-monthly organ called *Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzi*. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian had urged the Diocesan delegates at the Convention held on May 2, 1937, and September 4, 1938, to undertake the publication of such a periodical for the propagation of Diocesan news and for the cultivation of religious and cultural interests among the faithful of the Armenian Church.[1]

The periodical was devoted to religious, ethical, literary, historical, and artistic subjects. It was to serve as the official organ of the Diocese in America, was non-political in aim, and was "dedicated to the ideal of instructing the church's spiritual children in the principles set down by the founder of the Christian Church," as written by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian in his introductory editorial.

When the first issue appeared the reaction of the people was generally favorable. Many letters of congratulations were received by the Diocese. An editorial in the *Mirror-Spectator* entitled "A New Publication" commented that "the publication of a newspaper or magazine is an expensive luxury, and often a prohibitive necessity. Especially to undertake the publication of an Armenian periodical is often to court martyrdom."[1] The publication was indeed a brave attempt to keep the spiritual and intellectual light burning in the Armenian communities. Numerous noted Armenian writers contributed articles to the periodical. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's own contributions were invaluable.

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[1] "Amerigahay Geank" ("American-Armenian Life"), *The Gotchnag*, September 2, 1939, p. 946.

3. Public Lecture Series

In keeping with his efforts to develop the best in Armenian culture, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian proclaimed the month of October a month of culture to be observed each year in elaborate ceremonies.[2] The Diocese contributed by sponsoring a popular lecture series which was held every week at St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in New York. The topics were usually of a religious, ethical, historical and cultural nature and avoided controversial or political issues.[3]

The first lecture in the series was given by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian who selected for his topic the national epic,

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[1] Editorial, "A New Publication," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, October 18, 1939, p. 2.

[2] "Arhachnortagan T'emi Erespokhanagan Zhoghovner," New York, September 21-22, 1940, p. 22.

[3] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Zhoghovrtagan Lsaran Arhachnortarani Ghegavorout'ean Dag" ("Popular Lecture Series Sponsored by the Diocese"), The Gotchnag, December 9, 1939, p. 1318.

David of Sasoun.[1] It was hoped that similar public lecture series would soon be undertaken in other communities. In the ensuing months and years the Diocese sponsored and observed celebrations, recalling names and great moments in Armenian history. Often musical programs by Armenian artists were also included in the well-attended series. Nearly two thousand persons were present at the millennial celebration of "David of Sasoun" which took place on April 21, 1939, in the Pythian Temple in New York City. In commenting upon the significance of the epic, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian referred to it as "the epic which reveals our people's belief in religious freedom, and in the protection of their religious life, and it epitomizes the eternal and unquenchable fire of Armenian faith."[2]

4. The Diocesan Auxiliary Committee

In response to the growing financial needs of the Diocese, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, with the consent of the Central Executive Committee, was instrumental in organizing the Diocesan Auxiliary Committee in March, 1940. The Central Executive of the Diocesan Auxiliary organization consisted of twelve members. The aim of the Diocesan Auxiliary was to support the Diocese financially and morally in her endeavors to disseminate national culture for the welfare of the Armenian Church and community.[1]

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[1] The epic "David of Sasoun" has won its place in world poetry. Armenia was invaded during the seventh to ninth centuries by Arabs. These invasions resulted in many hardships and trials for the people, including poverty and slavery. The response was an ardent defense of national and religious freedom by the Armenians who repeatedly resisted the oppressors, confident of victory, which finally came. The imaginary half-legendary hero of their struggles was David of Sasoun whose exploits were handed down from generation to generation.

[2] Armine Dikijian, "Prelacy Celebrates David of Sasoun Epic," The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, April 24, 1940, p. 8.

The Diocesan Convention held in New York in 1940 instituted a "voluntary taxation" plan to help finance the administration of the Diocese. A dollar-per-person annual assessment plan was conducted by the Diocesan Auxiliary and its branches in various communities to make this financial drive a success.[2] The Diocesan Auxiliary has won public recognition for its enthusiastic efforts to enhance Armenian heritage and to solicit financial resources for the Diocese.

5. Annual Clergy Conference and Clergy Training Program

Another program instituted by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was the annual clergy conference first held in Troy, New York, on September 3-5, 1940.[3] The Primate assembled all the clergy of the Diocese for several days prior to the Diocesan Convention to discuss matters pertinent to church organization, rituals, and social and moral issues in order to provide the pastors with vital insights to meet the challenges of the modern world.[1]

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[1] "Dzrakir Ganonakir Arharchnortarani Ozhantag Miout'ean" ("By-Laws of the Diocesan Auxiliary Committee"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, II (October, 1940), p. 9; "Hay Egeghats'agan Geank'" ("Armenian Church Life"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, II (August, 1940), pp. 8-9.

[2] "Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov," ("National Diocesan Convention"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, III (October, 1941), p. 14.

[3] "Arhachnortagan T'emi Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovner," New York, September 27-28, 1940, p. 26.

Closely allied with the clergy conference was the desire to solve the problem of trained clergy in the Diocese. The problem of preparing trained clergymen for the Armenian Church in America was discussed by a score of priests and lay leaders at a special meeting held on May 27, 1940, at the office of the Diocese. It was decided to elect a sub-committee to formulate a well-studied plan to present to the Central Executive Committee and then to the Diocesan Convention for ratification.[2]

At the Diocesan Convention held on September 27-28, 1941, in the Holy Cross Church, New York, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian reported on the preliminary investigations of the committee and presented a plan for the training of Armenian clergymen at the General Theological Seminary in New York City. The Convention allocated $1,500 for the realization of this project.[3] However, the project never materialized despite the determination of the Archbishop and his committee to solve this important problem. "Granted the will, no task is impossible," the Primate often remarked.[1]

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[1] Archbishop Hovsēp'ian expressed his regret to the Diocesan Convention that so few clergymen showed serious interest in participating in the Clergy Conference.

[2] Among the members of the sub-committee was Reverend H. G. Benneyan, a member of the Armenian Protestant Community.

[3] "Arhachnortagan T'emi Eresp'okhanagan Zhovhovner, New York, September 27-28, 1940, pp. 10, 15.

It was not at all surprising that after much had been said and written concerning the necessity of preparing a cadre of trained clergymen for the Armenian Church, no tangible solution materialized. No one could deny that the task was a difficult one. Paradoxically, the major obstacle was not the financial situation, but the difficulty in finding worthy candidates willing to dedicate themselves to the service of the Church.[2]

Another solution to the shortage of parish priests was the employment of Shrchoun Hoviw (Minister-at-large) for churches in America.[3] Several priests were asked to serve in this capacity, but the program was discontinued because it proved to be both financially and administratively inadequate.

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[1] Editorial, "The Problem of Trained Clergy," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, June 18, 1941, p. 2.

[2] This was also the case in the time of Bishop Giwlēsērian whose initiative in attacking the problem of trained clergy remained unrealized. It was only in the sixties, with the opening of St. Nerses Theological School, that the concept was materialized.

[3] "Arhachnortagan T'emi Eresp'okhanagan Zhovhovner," New York, September 21-22, 1940, p. 14.

6. Views on Unity

After assuming office the Primate was often questioned as to why he did not attend, preach and officiate at Divine Liturgy in the only two churches considered dissident, St. Illuminator in New York and St. Gregory the Illuminator in North Philadelphia. The churches who had remained loyal to the Diocese numbered twenty-one. He was also asked why he did not participate in services or give benediction to the people congregated in the dissident churches among whom there certainly were to be found many God-fearing persons who did not approve of the present situation in the Church. The Archbishop replied to these questions by stating:

> As a representative of the Catholicos of All Armenians, we cannot attend churches that do not submit to the dispositions of the supreme authority. We cannot take part in services and rites conducted by suspended and even defrocked priests, unless the unity and disrupted order of the church is restored.[1]

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian further elaborated that he could not cooperate with an Assembly and Central Executive Committee which defied the authority of the Catholicos.

In reply to the question of what needed to be done to end the unfortunate situation within the Church the Archbishop felt that it was due to partisan politics of certain groups. To those who suggested removal of the present members of both Executive Committees and the election of an impartial

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[1] Garekin Hovsēp'ian, "A Problem of the Armenian Church," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, June 12, 1940, p. 1.

Central Executive Committee, he replied:

> That which the highest authority has accepted and confirmed we cannot dissolve. And let us add that the present Committee under one leadership is keeping strictly within ecclesiastical line, and has done nothing that might be construed to be factional or partisan.[1]

Thus, the only road remaining open to the dissident churches was, he concluded, "to voluntarily dissolve the unconfirmed Assembly and its subordinate Central Committee, and to turn over, unconditionally, the administration of the Churches to us."[2]

E. Wartime Patriotic Impulse

During World War II soldiers of Armenian parentage did yeoman service for the freedom and victory of the Allied Cause. Compatriots of Armenian-American GI's fought with outstanding gallantry in the Allied forces of France and the Soviet Union.[3] Nearly 18,500 Armenian-American young men participated in World War II as infantrymen, fliers, Marines, sailors, and Coast Guardsmen for the victory of the United States.[4]

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[1] The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, June 12, 1940, p. 5.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Approximately 10,000 Armenian soldiers served with the French forces and about 300,000 with the Soviet armies. James H. Tashjian, The Armenian American in World War II (Boston: Hairenik Association, 1952), pp. X-XI.

[4] Pictures and information concerning these men can be found in the following periodicals: The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, Hairenik Weekly, Baikar, and Hairenik.

The Armenian people and Church in America supported their government with great exuberance during World War II. Armenian communities throughout the country brought their humblest contributions to the war effort through such programs as War Loan Drives, Red Cross campaigns, U.S.O., and National War Fund appeals. The Armenian Church greeted the news of America's entry into the global war with official pronouncements which reflected her approbation of this course of action and affirmed her complete loyalty to the national cause. The Diocese was equally eloquent in its support of the homeland because Armenia was carrying its crusade against Nazi invasion.

As a result of this patriotic sentiment, a number of groups were organized to encourage friendship and provide aid to Soviet Armenia. Among these were the Armenian War Relief, David of Sasoun Tank Column Committee, and the American Committee for Armenian Rights. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, in spite of his advanced age, took the initiative to make extensive parish visitations, exhorting congregations to do their utmost in providing full and brotherly aid to Soviet Armenia and the Armenian war sufferers of the diaspora.

The Diocese launched two fund-raising campaigns, the Armenian War Relief in 1942 and the David of Sasoun Tank Column in 1943. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm surrounding these campaigns was impaired by partisan strife. The Rhamgavars, the AGBU, and the Hnch'ag parties supported the

Diocesan efforts and cooperated with the two Committees. The Armenian Progressive League, on the other hand, pursued an independent course and was reluctant to join with the others until the entire funds raised by The Armenian War Relief were allocated to Armenia. Much criticism was leveled against this group because of their rigid position. The Tashnags alleged that the Progressive League was pursuing a totally "narrow, factional, and political course and that its only objective in national life was to contribute toward Communist propaganda in America."[1]

The major objection raised by the Tashnag Party to these Diocesan Committees was that they intentionally excluded them from participation. Consequently, they continued, the committees would not be able to gain national recognition and thereby expect Tashnag moral or financial support because these committees made no attempt to include in their membership all segments of the Armenian community.[2]

The fact that the Armenian Diocese sponsored these projects did not necessarily indicate that the Diocese held pro-Soviet views, as Tashnag charges suggested. Rather, they reflected the beliefs of a majority of Armenians who wished to maintain and strengthen ties with the fatherland, and moreover, were an expression of Christian and humanitarian sentiment toward their brethren who were afflicted by the war.

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[1] Editorial "Nor Barhagdoumĕ Hankanagout'ean Mĕ Shourch," ("The New Dissension about a Fund-Raising Campaign") *Hairenik*, March 26, 1943; Editorial, "Tsakhogh Tserhnargi Mĕ Tshakhogh Vakhjanĕ," *Hairenik*, September 2, 1943.

[2] Editorial, "Nor Barhagdoumĕ Hankanagoutean Mĕ Shourch," *Hairenik*, March 26, 1943.

1. Armenian War Relief Committee

In September, 1941, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian reminded Armenians in America that "dark clouds have gathered over the Armenian homeland, because Armenians have not escaped involvement in the present world conflict. With the attack of Germany upon Russia, the devastating waves of the war have reached Armenia, a member of the Soviet Union." In an article in the September issue of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, entitled "Dark Clouds over the Horizon of Armenia," Archbishop Hovsēp'ian raised the crucial question:

> What will be the fate of the people? We cannot remain unconcerned. There are two factors in our concern; our people within the boundaries of the Armenian homeland and those outside.[1]

At the Diocesan Convention on September 27-28, 1941, at Holy Cross Church in New York, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian reiterated to the delegates his anxiety about the grave situation facing Armenia with the invasion of Germany. He called upon them to form a committee under the Diocese to extend aid to the war stricken people of Soviet Armenia.[2] In an official press release which appeared in the Armenian papers, it was learned that the Diocesan Convention had authorized the Primate with the cooperation of the Central Committee to organize a body for the purpose of sending aid to Soviet Armenia.[1]

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[1] Garegin Hovsepian, "Dark Clouds Over the Horizon of Armenia," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, September 17, 1941, p. 1.

[2] "Arhachnortagan T'emi Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovner," New York, September 27-28, 1941, pp. 11-12.

Prior to the formation of the Armenian War Relief Committee another group, called the Armenian "V" (Victory) Committee, was organized under the chairmanship of Captain James Chankalian. Its purpose was to provide medical aid to Soviet Armenia and the Soviet Union and to coordinate all efforts for the relief of Soviet Armenia and the USSR alone. The Armenian "V" Committee cooperated with the Russian War Relief, formally known as the American Committee for Medical Aid to the Soviet Union. The Armenian Committee was to despatch its aid through the American Committee.[2] This committee claimed to be non-partisan, non-sectarian, and with no ideological orientation. The committee also had resolved to merge with any special committee formed by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.

In a press release issued on October 17, 1941, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian announced the formation of a new body called the Armenian War Relief Committee. This group was to assume the work begun by the Armenian "V" Committee of

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[1] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Haygagan Hantsnakhoumpě" ("The Armenian Committee"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, III (November, 1941) p. 35.

[2] "Organize Armenian 'V' Committee for Medical Aid," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, September 17, 1941, p. 1.

sending medical aid to the Soviet Union and the Armenian victims of the war in the Near East and Europe. Its policy also was to be non-sectarian and non-political, and its membership was to be representative of all segments of the Armenian community. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was to serve as president of the Committee. Several weeks later it became evident, however, that the "V" Committee had not dissolved. Its unwillingness to do so stemmed from its belief that the Armenian War Relief Committee had deviated from its initial objective when it decided to add to its original aim a second one--the sending of aid to Armenian victims of the war in the Near East and Europe. It argued that there already existed an independent campaign planned by the Armenian General Benevolent Union for destitute Armenian refugees in the Near East.

At this point, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian advised that both projects be combined under his leadership. He explained that, by merging the two groups, much unnecessary competition would be avoided.[1] Consequently, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian issued a new press release encouraging the people "to gather, hand-in-hand and heart-to-heart around the present national committee, casting aside all factional and other differences so as to make it possible to dispatch with haste all available brotherly aid to the Soviet Union of which Soviet Armenia is a part, and to the Armenian war sufferers of the diaspora."[1]

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[1] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Hay Egeghets'agan Geank'" ("Armenian Church Life"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, III (November, 1941), p. 1.

In November a delegation from the Armenian "V" Committee called upon Archbishop Hovsēp'ian and expressed their readiness to dissolve and to transfer all accounts to the Armenian War Relief Committee.[2] Thereupon, arrangements were made to organize meetings in all Armenian communities in the country. The sum of $102,096.84 was raised by the Armenian War Relief Committee during the 1941-1942 campaign, according to an official statement released by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.[3] In addition to raising funds, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian believed that this campaign served to promote a moral, patriotic, and cultural zeal and interest among the people.

2. David of Sasoun Tank Column Campaign

A part of the war was being waged at the doorstep of the Armenian homeland. The Diocese in America supported the fatherland's cause which was also the cause of the United States, their adopted country. In 1943 the Diocese sponsored a campaign to raise funds for the David of Sasoun Tank Column of the Soviet Army, which was inspired through the appeal of the Deputy Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian of Ēchmiadzin. Perhaps more important than financial aid was the moral support the Armenian Church in America continued to give to the cause of Ēchmiadzin and Armenia.

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[1] "Primate Issues Official Statement Urging All to Unite Under Banner of the Armenian War Relief," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, November 12, 1941, p. 1.

[2] "V Committee to Submit Accounts to Armenian Relief," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, December 3, 1941, p. 1.

[3] "Final AWR Campaign Totals $102,096.84," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, September 16, 1942, p. 1.

On January 22, 1943, Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian sent a telegram to Stalin at the Kremlin hailing him for his leadership and to the Red Army for driving out the Germans from their land. Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian wired:

> I contribute to the fund for the construction of the tank column named after David of Sasoun, precious panagia [cross] adorned with diamonds and other gems, platinum and diamonds worth 80,000 rubles, also one thousand English pounds sterling and 50,000 Rubles. I request your order to open a special account in the State Bank of USSR. Simultaneously I am addressing special messages to religious Armenians throughout the world to contribute their savings to the construction of the tank column named David of Sasoun.[1]

To this telegram Stalin replied in the following manner:

> Please convey to religious Armenians and the clergy of Ēchmiadzin Catholicosate who have contributed funds to build tank column named David of Sasun, my greetings and the gratitude of the Red Army. Instruction about opening special account in the State Bank of USSR given.[2]

The message from Ēchmiadzin struck a responsive chord in the hearts of Armenians living in America. In an editorial

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[1] "Catholicos of Ēchmiadzin Congratulates J. Stalin," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, January 27, 1943, p. 1.

[2] Ibid. Throughout the War, the Russian Church also continued to serve the nation. In September, 1943, Metropolitan Sergii, Acting Primate, reported that in answer to his appeals, the faithful had donated eight million rubles, much of it for the Dmitrii Donskoi Tank Column. John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State, 1917-1950 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1953), p. 295.

"Message from Ēchmiadzin," the mood of patriotism was described in the following words:

> Contributing toward the construction of a tank column named after that great hero, 'Sassuntzi David', is living once again the thrills of his epic exploits. Because today the sons of Armenia are performing glorious and super human feats on the battlefields with many other peoples of the Soviet Union.[1]

On February 21, 1943, under the presidency of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian, a deliberative meeting was held at Diocesan headquarters where an exchange of opinions took place concerning the formation of a Committee for the David of Sasoun Tank Column. Subsequently a Central Committee was formed, and Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was requested to make an immediate appeal for the campaign.[2]

On March 17, 1943, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian informed Armenians in America that the American government had granted him permission to organize a campaign for contributions to the David of Sasoun Tank Column. The Primate appealed to all Armenians, "... without discrimination, to forget secondary differences under present urgent conditions and for the sake of helping our fatherland, to gather about this Committee, which will have its branches in all large and small communities wherever possible."[1]

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[1] Editorial, "Message from Ēchmiadzin," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, January 27, 1943, p. 2.

[2] "Form New Committee for David of Sassun," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, March 10, 1943, p. 1.

The David of Sasoun Tank Column Campaign was initiated by the Diocese on April 11, 1943, at Manhattan Center in New York City. On that day nearly $10,000 was contributed to the cause.[2] The entire David of Sasoun Tank Column Campaign netted a total of $105,600, which was transferred to Archbishop Ch'ēōrēk'jian in Ēchmiadzin by the committee in charge.[3] During the campaign an unfortunate misunderstanding created confusion in the minds of the Armenian public as the result of an editorial appearing in the Lraper on April 17.

> We are happy to announce to the Armenian Americans that the President's War Relief Control Board has granted permission to the David of Sasoun Tank People's Committee to solicit funds, in the meanwhile appreciating the efforts still being carried on by the committee to realize unity, in spite of difficulties raised against it.[4]

The David of Sasoun Tank Column Central Committee appealed to the President's War Relief Control Board in Washington to substantiate the veracity of the statement made in the editorial of the Lraper. The reply from the government to the Diocese denied authorization to any group other than the Diocesan sponsored committee already in charge of the campaign.[1]

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[1] "New Committee Organized for David of Sasoun Tank Column Campaign Headed by Archbishop Garegin," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, March 24, 1943, p. 1.

[2] Armine D. Bozian, "David of Sasoun Campaign Opens with Big Contribution," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, April 14, 1943, p. 1.

[3] "Amerigahay Geank'" ("Armenian-American Life"), The Gotchnag, January 29, 1944, p. 113.

[4] "David of Sasoun Tank Column Committee Issues Statement," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, April 28, 1943, p. 1. The Lraper

It is interesting to observe the reaction of a community of immigrants during the war years to the heroic resistance of their compatriots before the invading enemy. These men, especially those of the older generation, were proud of their national identity and their Armenian ancestry and wanted everyone to be aware of it. The more assimilated believed in the glory that is America, not the glory that was Armenia. Nevertheless, there were no conflicting loyalties. Aiding Armenia or the Soviet Union was aiding the Allies with whom the Americans were in sympathy.

F. Mission and Vision

Since his arrival in the United States as Plenipotentiary in 1936 and up to the time of his election as Catholicos in 1943, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's prime concern had been to heal the ecclesiastical breach, restore the spiritual welfare of the Armenians, and reorganize the churches of the Diocese. Although he was not able to heal the schism in the Armenian Church, his gentle forbearing and unfailingly wise leadership soothed frayed tempers and directed people's energies into more constructive channels.

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is the official organ of the Armenian League which is of Communist orientation.

[2] *Ibid.*

During the Diocesan Convention which met in Worcester on October 2-3, 1943, he presented his resignation from the Primacy in order to become Catholicos of Cilicia. In his last report to the Diocesan Convention he urged the delegates to strive toward the final realization of unity and toward the erection of an Armenian Church Cathedral with a Diocesan Complex. However, the problem of unity proved particularly acute and the time was not yet ripe for the Diocesan complex.

1. Cathedral and Diocesan House

Like Archbishop Dēr Hovhannēsian, Primate in 1926, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian in 1942 favored a strong central Diocesan authority. He felt the need for a Cathedral to give a sense of unity to the Armenian community in America and to emphasize the place of religion in American life. He strove diligently for the realization of this goal.[1]

In his report of the Diocesan Convention in 1942 Archbishop Hovsēp'ian introduced the idea for a Cathedral and Diocesan House.[2] He urged the delegates to initiate a campaign for the building of a Cathedral in New York without further delay. He also advised the Convention to delegate the Central Executive Committee to take preliminary steps for this purpose. The delegates gave their unanimous support to the motion.[1] However, this campaign was postponed because of the two emergency campaigns to help Armenia during wartime. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian and his co-workers were most anxious over this situation as expressed in the following editorial by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian entitled, "Mother Cathedral and Diocesan House."

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[1] Actually, the Diocesan Convention of 1926 had appropor-tioned $100,000 for the building of a Cathedral. Due to the Great Depression the idea was abandoned.

[2] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Srpazan Arhachnorti Zegout'soumě Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovin," ("The Report of the Primate to the Diocesan Convention"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, IV (January, 1943), p. 170.

> We have one concern--that we may go astray, lose our identity, and eventually our national and ecclesiastical image because of a lack of knowledge, organization, and because of indifference.[2]

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian felt that the creation of a strong religious and cultural organization and the systematic implementation of spiritual and educational programs would deter assimilation. The design of the Cathedral was to follow the distinctive features of Armenian Church architecture.

Although Archbishop Hovsēp'ian reiterated the need for a cultural and Diocesan complex at the 1943 Diocesan Convention, the task was left to his successors, Archbishops Diran Nersoian, Mamprē Kalfaian, Sion Manougian, and Torkom Manougian, who labored for the Cathedral and Diocesan complex. In 1959 the Diocesan house was completed. On Sunday, April 28,

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[1] "Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov, November 7-8, 1942," ("National Diocesan Convention"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, IV (February, 1943), p. 200.

[2] Karekin Hovsēp'ian, "Mayr Egeghets'i Ew Arhachnortaran," ("Mother Cathedral and Diocesan House"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, IV (August, 1943), p. 371.

1968, the new Armenian Cathedral of St. Vartan was consecrated by His Holiness Vazkēn I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

2. Last Appeal for Unity

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's mission to America demanded that he serve as a bridge-builder between feuding brethren. His initial attempts in 1936 ended in failure, and even after his election as Primate his voice often went unheeded. Before leaving the United States to become Catholicos of Cilicia he made a last effort to fulfill the mission which until then was unaccomplished.

At the Clergy Conference on October 1-2, 1943, which preceded the Diocesan Convention, a resolution on unity and rapprochement with the dissident faction was passed. It read as follows:

> In accord with the requirements set forth by the Primate, the time has come to terminate the schism which has disrupted the internal life of the church.[1]

Encouraged by the support he received from the clergy, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian presented a forceful speech to the Diocesan Convention. The main thrust of his address follows:

> The most important issue confronting the Armenian Church is the problem of schism. No time must be lost in semantics. To admit that 'there is no schism,' 'that no relation with the Tashnags is desirable,' and that 'the doors of the churches are open to all' is void of truth.

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[1] "Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov" ("National Representative Convention"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, V (January, 1943) p. 146.

> The tragedy lies in the fact that tens of thousands of people are not with us and do not subject themselves to the authority of our Diocese nor to the Catholicos of All Armenians. For several years now various sacraments and rites have been performed by suspended clergymen and even by defrocked priests, with no objections from the faithful. This deplorable situation only contributes to the further decay of the ecclesiastical institutions. Therefore we cannot remain indifferent. The spirit of dissension has deeply penetrated the family. The time has come to find an ecclesiastical remedy for the situation.
>
> One thing must be clear, that all of us are duty-bound to correct our errors and that no political disagreements or controversies should be settled under the roofs of churches. It is imperative that the 'Diocesan Convention' and the 'Central Executive Committee' of the dissident group, which lack confirmation by the Catholicos, herewith be dissolved. The dissident Board of Trustees and the suspended clergymen may request in writing that the Pontiff reconsider their case. Let the lamentable experiences of the past serve as guideposts for today.[1]

This appeal generated a long heated argument. The Primate's motion on unity was defeated by a vote of nine to twenty.[2] The Archbishop requested that his objection to the decision be recorded to read that "... this refusal is detrimental to the Armenian Church."[3] Fathers Terenig P'ōladian, Zkōn Dēr Hagopian, Mesrob Semerjian, and Ghewont Arabian also requested that their objections against the decision of the Convention be recorded.[4]

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[1] "Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov," ("National Representative Convention"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, V (January, 1944), pp. 140-143.

[2] "Arhachnortagan T'ēmi Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovner," Worcester, Mass., October 2-3, 1943, p. 8.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

When news of the Convention's refusal was made public the reaction of the dissident churches was one of regret and frustration. Moreover, the partisan press again charged that Diocesan circles alone were responsible for the continuation of the dissension within the community.[1] The dissident church had also failed her test in history. In her charges against her opponents, she repeatedly gave evidence of an equally rigid and uncompromising stand. The Diocesan Convention of the dissident Church was held on November 6-7, 1943, in Boston. The following resolution on unity reveals the firm stand they had adopted:

> In scrutinizing the question of the administrative unity of the Armenian Church of America and in becoming acquainted with the decision of the Diocesan Convention of the other faction, the Diocesan Convention regretfully records attempts to protract the dissension of the Armenian Church in America. The Convention remains resolute that its position and course are generally in harmony with the spirit, discipline, and the welfare of the Armenian Church. It believes that the justice it seeks will be realized in the principles of law and justice, that freedom and independence will be returned to the Armenian Church, and that the unity of the Armenian Church in America will be restored. Likewise, the Diocesan Convention resolves that as long as the spirit of reconciliation and unity is denied by its opponents, it finds it difficult to pursue the possibilities to reconciliation.[2]

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[1] Editorial, "Mer Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovin Arhtiw," ("On the Eve of Our National Representative Convention"), Hairenik, November 7, 1943.

[2] "Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghovi Oroushoumner," ("Dissident Diocesan Convention: Resolutions"), Hairenik, December 22, ;943, p. 3; For complete text see, Hairenik, December 16-19, 1943 and Hairenik, December 22, 1943.

Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's last appeal and what he aspired for was the undoing of the harm that political parties had created in the past. Although he did not succeed in establishing brotherhood among the people, he reawakened the spirit of unity and set the stage for future dialogues with the dissidents by his successors. He was indeed a personality of prophetic stature. It is not uncommon to witness that often the voices of prophets remain unheeded by the generation of their own day!

G. The Ladder of Greatness

Throughout his eventful life it was the destiny of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian to shoulder the most difficult tasks in the service of his people and Church. According to a much circulated anecdote, during one of the banquets held upon the occasion of his Jubilee Celebration in 1944, he asked God to extend his life another fifteen years in order that he could complete the tasks he had set out to accomplish. The master of ceremonies for the banquet responded by wishing the Archbishop not fifteen additional years, but fifty-one. The Archbishop replied that if this were to be, fifty of the fifty-one years he would rededicate to the Church, and the remaining one for himself.

During his short tenure of office, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian grew in esteem and stature. In 1943-1944 the Diocese expressed its gratitude to him by sponsoring Jubilee Celebrations in his honor. When he was called to become Catholicos of the See of Cilicia in 1943, his departure from America was indeed a distinct loss for the Armenian community in America, but a great gain for that historic See.

1. Jubilee Celebrations

The Diocean Convention of 1941 adopted a resolution to observe throughout the Diocese the seventy-fifth anniversary of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's birth and the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood.[1] However, due to wartime uncertainties and Diocean commitments the Jubilee Celebrations were postponed temporarily. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's election to the throne of the See of Cilicia in 1943 obligated the Central Committee of the Diocese to form a special Jubilee Committee to prepare for the celebrations. The Jubilee Celebrations took place between September 1943 and April 1944 in various cities throughout the United States. They were inaugurated in Chicago and were climaxed by a Pontifical Mass and Jubilee Banquet in New York.

The celebrations once again revealed that, despite his fame and high office, this great man remained gracious and humble to the very end. In evidence of this, the Catholicos-elect expressed his desire to appropriate all the proceeds of the Jubilee Celebrations to the Catholicate of Cilicia

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[1] "Amerigahay Geank'" ("American-Armenian Life"), *The Gotchnag*, September 16, 1944, p. 905.

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for the training of seminarians and in anticipation of making the See of Cilicia a hearth of illumination and warmth as well as of religion.[1] A total of $42,822.52 was forwarded to the Catholicate. Consequently, an Auxiliary Committee was formed by the Diocese to aid the Catholicate in the training of seminarians to later serve as pastors in American parishes. Throughout the country churches were urged to form such committees, and individuals were encouraged to sponsor seminarians.

On June 29, 1944, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was heard on radio giving a speech which marked the end of the celebrations. Among many observations he made, one was prominent. He stated that, "... as the individual can become immortal by his life, aspirations, and work, so also can a nation. Spiritual values make a nation immortal."[2]

So it was that a child born in an obscure village of Artsakh, of poor parentage, was guided by Divine Providence from being a youthful acolyte through the sacred portals of Ēchmiadzin. He was chosen to fill the vacant chair of the Holy See of Cilicia at Antelias, Lebanon.

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[1] Karekin Hovsepian, "Spiritual Values Make a Nation Immortal," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, July 29, 1944, p. 7.

[2] Ibid.

2. Election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian as Catholicos of Cilicia

It was learned in a telegram dated May 10, 1943, from Beirut, Lebanon, that at the convention held on the same day at St. Illuminator's Mother Church of the Catholicate of Cilicia, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian was unanimously elected as Catholicos of Cilicia. The telegram also added that his early arrival was eagerly awaited. It was signed by Archbishop Khat Achabahian, Locum-Tenens of the Catholicate.[1]

On May 18, 1943, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian responded to Archbishop Achabahian in the following words:

> We are grateful to you and the convention of delegates for your trust in me. It was necessary to obtain our consent. We are advanced in age and have other obligations toward the Holy See Ēchmiadzin but we humbly bow before the will of God and the wishes of our people.
>
> As soon as safety of travel permits we will make the necessary arrangements and start on our voyage with Terenig Vartapet Poladian.[2] Inform us about the condition and the needs of the See. Pray to God to help us in our heavy obligation and calling.[3]

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[1] "Archbishop Garegin Hovsepian Elected Catholicos of Cilicia," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, May 28, 1943. p. 1.

[2] Vardabet is a reference to a celibate priest in the Armenian Church. Father Terenig P'ōladian, later Bishop, received his Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from New York University in February, 1944. He accompanied Archbishop Hovsēp'ian to Antelias where he became Dean of the Seminary.

[3] "Archbishop Garegin Hovsepian Elected Catholicos of Cilicia," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, May 28, 1943, p. 1.

From the establishment of the Catholicate in Antelias, three Catholicoi had preceded Archbishop Hovsēp'ian. "No better choice could have been made," editorialized the Armenian press at the time. However, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's departure from the United States was delayed because of wartime difficulties. Although the majority of Armenians in the United States and abroad welcomed the Archbishop's election to the Cilician See, there were those who were not so enthusiastic. Recriminations against the Catholicos-elect appeared in the Armenian papers. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian responded in a most courteous and Christian manner, not in an effort to justify himself, but to elucidate the issues which led to the attack. One controversy appeared in two Armenian papers, the Mshag from Fresno and Lraper from New York, both of Communist orientation. An editorial entitled "Tawin Artiwnke" ("The Outcome of the Plot") appeared in the Mshag on June 11, 1943, and accused Archbishop Hovsēp'ian of secretly collaborating with the enemies of Archbishop Karekin Khach'adourian, former Primate of the Western Diocese, (1928-1934), who was also a candidate for the Catholicossal seat. The editorial continued to claim that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian had actively participated in a plot to sabotage the election of Archbishop Khach'adourian. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian responded to these charges in the following words:

> The editorial of your June 11 issue is a complete misrepresentation of the reality because I personally have had no involvement whatsoever either with the past or present Catholicossal election at Antelias.[1]

The Lraper also printed an editorial entitled "Irōk' Jhoghovrtēn Kaghdni" ("Truly, A Secret from the People") which appeared in its July 15, 1943, issue. The editorial criticized the Archbishop's views on unity in the Armenian Church. It charged that:

> It is obvious that the Archbishop, under the guise of Church unity, actually pursues political unity with the Tashnag Party. It will be no surprise to us to learn that the election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian as Catholicos of the Cilician See was made possible through negotiations with the Führer four months ago.[2]

These claims were refuted by the Diocesan office as mere fabrications and thus unforgiveable.

These allegations of the press were not well received by those who believed that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's election to the Catholicossate of Cilicia was for the best interests of the Armenian Church and people. His supporters advised the followers of the Lraper's political ideology to return to the mainstream of Armenian life and direct their energies into more constructive channels.

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[1] "Hay Egeghetsagan Ew Azkayin Geank'" ("Armenian Church and National Life"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, IV (July, 1943) pp. 345-346.

[2] Ibid.

On October 3, 1943, Father Diran Nersoyian of London, England, was unanimously elected by the Diocesan Convention in Worcester to succeed Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.[1] Although Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's imminent departure saddened the Armenian community, they were assured that Father Nersoyian was a worthy successor, handpicked by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.[2]

3. Catholicos of Cilicia

On January 2, 1945, accompanied by Father Terenig P'ōladian, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian boarded a freighter of the United States Navy in New York, enroute to Lebanon. The trip lasted almost two months. After stops in Egypt and Palestine, where he was received enthusiastically, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian arrived in Lebanon on March 23, 1945. From the border to Antelias, the Catholicos-elect received an unprecedented welcome by the Armenian faithful as well as by other

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[1] Zkōn Dēr Hagopian, "Dēr Diran Vartabed Nersoian Arhachnort Hayots' Amerigayi," ("Father Diran Nersoyian Primate of Armenians of America"), Hayastanyaitz Yegehetzy, V (September, 1944), p. 388.

[2] For biographical data on Father Nersoyian consult the following: Zkon Der Hagopian, "The New Primate is an Able Scholar and Administrator," The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, November 18, 1943, pp. 1-2; Arten Ashjian, "Tragedy Befalls the Armenian Church," Armenian Guardian, XI (October, 1958), pp. 3-5; Ralph A. Yagjian, "Patriarch Tiran Nersoyan, "The Digest," IV (1957-1958), pp. 65-70.

[3] A detailed description of this journey is given in The Armenian Mirror-Spectator in a series of articles by Terenig Pcladian. July 14, 1945; July 21, 1945; July 28, 1945.

Lebanese. State officials, representatives of all creeds, and men from all walks of life greeted him by the thousands as signs were carried bearing the words, "Long Live our Holy Father," "Welcome Holy Father," "Long Live the Armenian Catholicos," and "We Wholeheartedly Welcome His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia." As the motorcade proceeded, doves were released and the car of the Catholicos was showered with flowers. As they approached the Monastery, Cathedral bells rang out, their echoes reverberating in the nearby hills and gorges of the village of Antelias. At the entrance to the Cathedral, Archbishop Khat Achabahian, Locum-Tenens, embraced the Catholicos-elect and delivered to him the Patriarchal Staff. The clergy entered the Church in procession, where Archbishop Hovsēp'ian delivered the sermon.

On April 8, 1945, the ordination and consecration ceremonies of the new Pontiff were held in the Cathedral. Scores of dignitaries and faithful thronged the Church and grounds.[1] The enthronement ceremonies were conducted by six archbishops. After signing the forehead of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian with holy chrism, the officiating Archbishops kissed his forehead and gave the Oghchoyn (Kiss of Peace). They covered his head with a white veil, delivered unto him the patriarchal insignia and the staff, and proclaimed him Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

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[1] Terenig Poladian, "Catholicos Garegin Hovsepian Consecrated at Antelias," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, August 4, 11, 1945.

Immediately after assuming office, Catholicos Karekin Hovsēp'ian left for Ēchmiadzin where he presided at a National Armenian Church Assembly on June 22, 1945, which elected Archbishop Kēork Ch'ēōrēk'jian, Locum-Tenens, as Catholicos of All Armenians.[1] The presence of Catholicos Karekin as head of the See of Cilicia at the anointment ceremonies of the Catholicos of All Armenians at Ēchmiadzin was indicative of the renewal of intimate relations between the two Catholicosal Sees which had long been estranged. The existence of mutual affection and respect between the two Catholicoi afforded supremacy and primacy of honor to Ēchmiadzin, which Catholicos Karekin believed was her prerogative. From the very first day of his consecration, he declared in no uncertain terms the supremacy of the See of Ēchmiadzin.

Catholicos Karekin's preoccupations in Antelias were manifold. His accomplishments included the purchase of investment properties; addition of the Seminary Museum-Library; augmentation of the staff of the Seminary with qualified personnel; increase in quality and quantity of the monthly publication Hask, rendering it into a philological periodical; and construction of a summer residence for the

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[1] "Gevorg Cheorekjian Consecrated Catholicos of All Armenians," Armenian Mirror-Spectator, July 28, 1945, p. 1.

Catholicos with school and chapel on the premises. His tireless efforts and creative zeal enabled Antelias to become a spiritual and intellectual center. His incumbency witnessed an unprecedented spiritual and intellectual renaissance.

Advanced age, ill health, and medical advice, none of these convinced this dedicated servant of God to decrease the pace of his activities or to limit his arduous studies. By 1950 his great vitality waned, and it was apparent that he was seriously ill. On May 19, 1950, while in Egypt, he suffered a coronary thrombosis. From then on, his health deteriorated. Periodic signs of recovery were only illusions in spite of his strong desire to prolong his life.

On June 21, 1952, Saturday morning at 5:40, when the first rays of the sun flooded the room of this aged and fatigued Catholicos who lay motionless and unconscious, his soul departed from the flesh to seek a new abode in eternity. Life on earth was no more. Catholicos Karekin Hovsēp'ian had completed the long climb up the ladder of perfection.

H. Expansion of Churches

The Primacy of Archbishop Hovsep'ian witnessed the consecration of three new Armenian Churches. There were the Holy Resurrection Church in New Britian, Connecticut, in 1941; St. Leon's Church in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1941; and St. John Church in West Allis, Wisconsin, in 1942. St. Leon's

Church in Paterson and St. John Church in West Allis were the first to be built in those communities. Armenians in New Britain and North Philadelphia were obliged to acquire new edifices to replace their former churches which were lost to the dissident groups in compliance with court decisions. The North Philadelphians lost St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in 1934.[1] The new church was purchased in 1941 and was consecrated in the name of the Holy Trinity on December 26-27, 1942, by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.[2] The court verdict on the litigation over St. Stephen's Church in New Britain also favored the dissident group in 1938.[3]

This unfortunate situation contributed not only to the financial difficulties of the Armenian communities, but also further soured relationships between feuding brethren. Both sides fought for control of churches. As America entered the Second World War in 1941, the Armenian Church and community supported the national efforts for victory. Armenian youth took up this challenge with great enthusiasm. The Diocese gave its official blessing to their fighting brethren on the Russian front. Because of individual and national contributions and fund-raising campaigns pledged to Armenians overseas, financial resources were scarce for the building of new churches. When the war was finally over in 1945, the Diocese became more actively engaged in furthering its spiritual responsibility and conducted a massive campaign for new churches. With increasing affluence came a popular demand for external splendor, and Armenian Church architecture was utilized at its best in structure embellished with Western architectural techniques.

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[1] "Azkayin Eresp'okhanagan Zhoghov" ("National Diocesan Convention"), Providence, Rhode Island, November 7-8, 1942.

[2] Consecration and Dedication, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cheltenham, Pa., September 18, 1966.

[3] "Adenakrout'iwn," September 27-28, 1941, New York, pp. 8-9.

1. Holy Resurrection Church,
New Britain, Connecticut

The first Armenians to settle in New Britain date back to the 1890s.[1] The newcomers found employment in various manufacturing firms. Because of the limited space in the town, the immigrants lived close together and thus retained their ties with one another and with the homeland.

As early as 1900 the first Church Trustees were organized. Itinerant priests made their stops in this community and celebrated Divine Liturgy in rented halls or church edifices. Fortunately, the Armenians were allowed use of the facilities of the local St. Mark's Episcopal Chapel.

The Armenians of this community, however, aspired to their own church building. Karekin Kēorkian was instrumental in providing the leadership for this goal. By the middle of the 1920s the entire community was inspired with the desire for a new church. On November 8, 1925, cornerstone-laying ceremonies were conducted by the Primate, Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian. Consecration of the Church took place on September 12, 1936, the church being named the Saint Stephen's Church. Father Karekin Deovletian served as pastor of the community.

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[1] Information concerning the Holy Trinity Church is compiled from the following sources: Adenakrout'iwnner, May 15-16, 1927, Boston, pp. 38-39; "Adenakrout'iwn" September 27-28, 1941, New York, pp. 8-9; Third Annual Assembly of the ACYOA, September 3-5, 1949, Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, New Britain, Connecticut, pp. 7-9.

Because of the split in the church and the community crisis, the two factions of Armenians appealed to the local courts for ownership of the church. Those loyal to the Diocese lost the church to the dissident group in 1938.[1] In 1940 those loyal to Ēchmiadzin purchased a building which was consecrated on March 19, 1941, after undergoing the necessary renovations. Archbishop Hovsēp'ian conducted the ceremonies and named the new church the Holy Resurrection Church.

2. Saint Leon's Church,
Paterson, New Jersey

Armenian immigrants from many parts of the homeland came to Paterson, New Jersey. Predominant among the early settlers were Armenians from the region of Dikranagerd (Diarbekir) in Turkey. Immigration to Paterson dates back to the 1880s.[1] Most of these early migrants gained employment in textile factories. Following the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896, the Armenian population of Paterson rose to five hundred.[2]

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[1] "Adenakrout'iwn," September 27-28, 1941, pp. 8-9.

The first Armenian Church services were held in the local Episcopalian Church in 1898. Father Hovsēp' Sarajian celebrated the Divine Liturgy. From then on itinerant priests served the community. For Sunday religious services the faithful of Paterson attended the Holy Cross Armenian Church in Union City, New Jersey, built in 1907.

By 1929 the Armenians of Paterson felt the need for their own church and pastor. They were encouraged by Father Mamprē Kalfaian, pastor of the Holy Cross Church in Union City, in this endeavor. The Great Depression, however, necessitated abandonment of the project for a new church building. In 1932 at a Membership Meeting presided over by Primate Tourian, a Building Committee was formed. Among the members of this group were the Dishian Brothers--Boghos, Haig, Dikran, and Manoug--the Mihran and Erouant Kiwrkjian Brothers, and Harout'iwn Soghigian. In February, 1934, the St. Luke Episcopalian Church on Bloomfield Avenue was purchased for $6,000. Despite the financial difficulties of the Depression, the community spent $10,000 for renovations of the building. The first pastor to serve the parish was Father Hovhannēs Kawoukjian, who served from 1936 to 1938.

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[1] Ashjian, pp. 183-186; St. Leon's Armenian Apostolic Church 25th Anniversary Celebration, May 22, 1960; Second Anniversary, St. Leon's Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, New Jersey, October 1, 1967.

[2] Second Anniversary, St. Leon's Armenian Church, 1967.

After resigning as Locum-Tenens, Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian served the parish from 1938 until 1941. Archbishop Kalfaian served unselfishly and contributed sums of money for various puposes. On October 4, 1941, the church was consecrated by Primate Karekin Hovsēp'ian. By the 1950s, the church was too small to accomodate the growing community. Consequently, in 1958 three acres of land were purchased on Saddle River Road in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, as a site for a new church.[1] In January, 1963, a Building Committee to spearhead the drive for a new church building was elected with E. George Dabagian as chairman. On September 22, 1963, ground-breaking ceremonies were held, followed by a fund-raising kick off dinner in the afternoon. Pledges and donations totaled $80,000.

Construction of the new church was begun in March, 1965, and on April 10, 1965, cornerstone-laying ceremonies were conducted by Primate Sion Manougian. Consecration took place on September 18 and 19, 1965. Several individuals served as Godfathers for the new church, their contributions exceeding $20,000.

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[1] Ibid.

3. Saint John's Church
West Allis, Wisconsin

The parish of St. John's Armenian Church in West Allis was formed in the 1920s.[1] The majority of Armenians came from the region of Caesarea in Turkey. The first Church Trustees were organized in 1923. In 1934 a Ladies' Educational Association was formed to assist the Trustees in their work. This group sponsored an Armenian week-day school. With the building of a church in 1942, this association became the Women's Church Auxiliary.

Prior to the building of the church and the acquisition of a permanent pastor visiting priests served the needs of the community. The labors of several dedicated men culminated in the building of a church on West Washington Street in 1942 at a cost of $6,000. Sahag Mouradian stood prominent among his peers and served as Godfather for the church, consecrated on May 11, 1942 by Archbishop Hovsēp'ian.

Later years proved that the needs of the Armenian community of West Allis necessitated larger and more modern facilities. Therefore the community purchased new land in Greenfield, Wisconsin, in the late sixties, as a site for the new church and cultural center. The dedication of the Cultural Center as part of a two-phase construction took place on September 27, 1970.

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[1] Ashjian, pp. 272-275; Armenian Directory (Midwest Communities Illinois-Wisconsin-Indiana, 1966); Dedication of St, John's Church Cultural Center, September 27, 1970.

I. Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, the election of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian in 1938 came as a most timely blessing for the community rent assunder by the imported politics of the "old country." Indeed, the church in America needed a respite to heal her wounds and to prepare for a better future. It was this role as healer which the venerable Archbishop would fill perfectly.

But before the Primate-elect could begin his tasks, the Catholicos had to confirm him in office. Such confirmation was delayed for over eight months due to chaotic conditions in the Armenian SSR and the Soviet Union in general, known as the Yezhovchine--the massacres and purges directed by Stalin's NKVD Chief Yezhov. The upshot was the sadistic murder of Catholicos Khorēn I by the NKVD; now that the communists had claimed their own priestly victim, the Tashnag's responsibility for Archbishop Tourian's murder became muted.

By mid-May the confirmation finally arrived and the Primate began to implement a program of reform and regeneration, the effects of which are still felt in the Church today. His first efforts were directed at the betterment of Diocesan finances and the collection of funds to aid the Holy See in Armenia. More ambitious was the Primate's reinvigoration of the cultural dimension. This included the founding of a Diocesan periodical, the inauguration of a monthly public lecture series and the staging of plays and concerts. The Primate's cultural programs helped reinvigorate the ethnic identity of Armenians in America. His stress on ethnic themes may have been prompted by his desire to unite the factions of the community around a rejuvenated Armenian nationalism, the basic tenets of which all could accept. In the end, however, these efforts drew great public support, but not enough to transcend the political cleavages in the Church and community. In the purely ecclesiastical area, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian turned his attention to the problem of recruitment, training and education of the clergy. Although initially limited in scope, in later years the Diocesan priest education program expanded until it was possible to establish the St. Nerses Theological Seminary in 1962.

With the coming of World War II and the rapid progress of Nazi armies toward the Soviet heartland, including Armenia, the Primate organized the Armenian War Relief Committee to help finance the Soviet war effort. Finally, he made one last attempt to unify his flock during 1943, as he was preparing to depart to Lebanon, to become Catholicos of Cilicia. His attempt was abortive, but not because he lacked wisdom and courage. He failed because of the intensity of hatred persisting since 1933, as well as the ideological polarization between the Tashnags and their adversaries. These same problems also sabotaged the unity efforts of Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's successor, Rev. Father Diran Nersoyian, who took over as Primate late in 1944.

Significantly, the transition between the two Primates was uncommonly smooth, given the high calibre of these men, as well as their intellectual and temperamental similarities. The broad human experience through which Archbishop Hovsēp'ian passed from World War I to World War II equipped him to make rather unusual projections concerning the nature of the Armenian Church in the diaspora, especially in the United States. Although a product of the old school, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian's immediate and physical relationship to the plight of his people, the dispersion, and the resultant sociological and political convulsions through which they passed, made him sensitive to the exigencies of the Church and community at large.

Although he succeeded in refining the most noble aspects of the Armenian Church and culture, he nevertheless found himself caught in the inevitable stream of social evolution which was to engulf the Armenian Church and result in the emergence of a new and innovative generation. The rich history of the emerging "American" church falls outside the scope of this study. It will suffice to state that Archbishop Hovsēp'ian succeeded in imparting to the Armenian faithful an unprecedented *esprit de corps*, which facilitated the transformation of an essentially "immigrant church" into a "native church." If this marked the end of an era, it also signalled the beginning of a new.

CHAPTER XIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. The Church in Retrospect

An examination of the history Armenian Church in America requires a rather comprehensive understanding of her people. Since the fifth century, the fate of the Armenian Church and Nation have been indissolubly fused. Throughout history, the people of Armenia have been victimized because of their religious tenacity, and their Church has accepted victimization rather than compromise doctrine and risk national assimilation.

Although the earliest recorded arrival of Armenians in America placed between 1618 and 1656, their existence as an ethnic minority came much later. More significant were the small and isolated bands of immigrants who arrived between 1820 and 1882. This latter group was comprised in the main, of students, adventurers, and merchants whose original intent in coming to America was to share in its welath and educational opportunities, and then to return to the homeland and apply their profits and knowledge toward establishing a more affluent life. Yet, not surprisingly, the vast majority remained in America, mainly because of the incomparable comforts and freedom accorded to them in the American milieu--something non-existent in the Ottoman Empire. Yet permanent settlement was not the original intention of these immigrants. Indeed, the virtual absence of an Armenian female immigration during this period attests to the fact that a prolonged residence in America was not contemplated.

From 1845 onward the American Protestant Missionary movement in Turkey played a significant role in soliciting young candidates to study in Protestant institutions in America for the purpose of furthering the goals of the Mission in the Armenian provinces of Turkey. However, it is sufficient to note that until 1888, no aspect of indigeneous Armenian religious or ethnic expression had yet been institutionalized in America.

Unquestionably, the most important waves of Armenian immigrants arrived in America between 1882 and 1944, particularly subsequent to the massacres of 1894-1896 and the genocidal holocaust of 1915-1918. Although periodic persecution of Christians in the Ottoman Empire had become somewhat of an "endured" internal policy by the Armenians, the rise of Pan-Turkish nationalism produced alarming ramifications in the Armenian provinces. The frequency and ardour with which these persecutions were executed reached an intolerable point in 1895, when over 300,000 Armenians were slaughtered throughout the provinces; between 1909 and 1926, another two million perished. This resulted in a sudden and significant exodus of Armenians, especially throughout the Near East and to America.

With the growth of immigration, it was not uncommon for these young immigrants to congregate in port cities and metropolitan centers in cheap ghetto tenements. Here, they established their coffee-houses and centers of ethnic rendezvous. Clearly, a genuine community was emerging as opposed to the temporary male communities of the past. The establishment of these communities was marked by the introduction of Armenian language schools, the influx of Armenian political groups, and the development of various social, religious, and cultural societies and organizations.

The center of the community was the Church, while the mainstay of Armenian-American community life was still the rigid and severely inflexible family unit. The sociological problems posed by the rigidity of the family unit served almost as an antidote to assimilation to the New World.

It was through this unstable situation that the young American-born Armenian was forced to accept or reject the values of his immigrant parents as opposed to American social values. Thus, identity crisis was very common. Conservatively stated, the social adjustments, the political upheavals, the prejudice of non-Armenian neighbors, the destruction of the homeland, the dismemberment of families, financial difficulties, fear of assimilation, and the lack of enlightened leadership created in the Armenian Community certain pathological tendencies with tragic results.

Singularly, the one source of coherence within the community was the Church, to which the immigrants referred as their "National Home." To this day this reference has retarded the Armenian Church in her attempts to make sophisticated advances in assuming her proper role in modern society as a purely religious institution with a significant religious mission. From her inception in America, the Armenian Church and her hierarchy became the targets of political intrigue, intimidation, corruption, and schism. Unable to justify their existence in America, the Armenian political parties became insanely obsessed with dominating the Church as a podium for their political propaganda. With no legitimate governmental license, these political parties replaced the geographical reality of a fatherland with the "floating" geographical existence of the Church in diaspora. This utterly irrational displacement of values virtually deprived the Church and hierarchy of any role or mission except ritualistic--veritably turning the Church into a battleground for political warfare and secularly oriented activities. Two complete generations were moulded in this milieu.

The first spiritual superior of the Armenian Church in America was assigned in 1889 when the first parish and Church Trustees were also established. In 1891 the first Church was consecrated in Worcester, Massachusetts. With the establishment of the Diocese in 1898, a Diocesan structure emerged and attained at least a minimal degree of efficiency. With the growth of the Diocese, the Church actively participated in relief missions for the refugees of the Armenian massacres in Turkey and was instrumental in helping to establish educational institutions and orphanages for refugees. During the period of the twenties, the Church became increasingly embroiled in political frictions due to the emergence of the Rhamgavar Party as opposed to the revolutionary Tashnag Party. With other lesser political groups, these parties endeavoured to dominate the Church and hierarchy. By the late 1920s, the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin was beginning to lose the confidence of the revolutionary Tashnag group which encouraged the development of an anti-Ēchmiadzin Catholicate in the diaspora to offset Soviet influence on Ēchmiadzin. The Church and hierarchy became the center of a political controversy explicitly aimed at domination of the Church rather than "confessed" idealistic doctrines of the respective political groups. Often, certain clergy permitted themselves to be used by the political factions. In view of spiritual and educational shortcomings, the clergy could not face the great challenges of shepherding an immigrant community. This result was a "leadership crisis" which remained unresolved until the accession of Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian.

Yet, despite the crisis environment, the new Armenian communities managed to buy, build, or renovate churches throughout the American diaspora. Surprisingly, through no fault of her own, the Church was emerging gradually as perhaps the only "legitimate" institutionalized representation and expression of the Armenian people in America. America was still a Christian nation, and middle-class respectability prescribed the necessity of a Church institution. The Armenians, always alert to the pulse of America and to what was proper in terms of Anglo-Saxon values, naturally preserved the facade of their religious institution, which had been virtually drained of its spiritual content.

The short duration of the Independent Republic of Armenia from 1918 to 1920 resulted in an increasing aggressiveness by the Tashnag party toward domination of the Church. With the fall of the republic and the subsequent establishment of the Armenian Soviet state, the Rhamgavar group made major advances toward domination of the Church in the diaspora. Yet periodic purges in Soviet Armenia of religious institutions lent greater credibility to the Tashnag cause. On the other hand, the Rhamgavar cause also gained momentum by means of its "cherished fatherland" policy of journalism. Paradoxically, although neither political premise could bear fruits for the Church (and indeed both policies were detrimental to her Christian mission), nevertheless the Church became a major victim of their harassments and interference.

This was manifested in the senseless murder of Primate Archbishop Ghewont Tourian during Divine Liturgy on December 24, 1933. What had previously been the immature political sparring of an uprooted people now exploded into monstrous proportions, affecting every community throughout America and generally in the dispersion.

If the family elders had given their American-born off-spring any reason to have compassion and love for their heritage, they now completely bewildered this generation and in one blow destroyed what little ethnic pride might have existed. The Church now became barren as a religious institution, and assumed the role of a podium for hate-mongering leaders of the political parties. Both major political groups became deeply entrenched in their respective parishes as vast numbers of "neutrals" withdrew from the Armenian scene. Until the 1940s, the Primates of the American Diocese were not able to accomplish enough in terms of religious programs and missions. Some organizational work was accomplished and reforms were undertaken concerning use of organs, regulation of services, and the establishment of Sunday schools.

B. Conclusions: Crisis and the Church

The foregoing chronological analysis presents a summary of the main developments in Armenian church history in the United States from 1888 until 1944. Looking at this overall sweep of church history, it is possible to reach some conclusions about the underlying forces which shaped the church's history in the New World.

A frequent theme that has been encountered in our previous analysis is that of communal crisis. The problem most likely to interest the historian is the search for the causes of the crisis in the Church. Since crisis was so prevalent, both in the Armenians' past in Turkey and their American present, it is possible to see it as a main link between the two existences. To be sure, the Turkish past clearly shaped the American present. It is from this past-present continuum, as presented in the foregoing study, that one should seek the deeper causes of church crisis.

1. National Character

Perhaps the most basic source of community instability is what sociologists call "national character." This is defined as "... relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are model among the adult members of a society."[1] In the Armenian case one has to consider the 3000-year span of Armenian national existence to discern those collective experiences which left a deep imprint on the nation's consciousness. While such an effort falls outside

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[1] Alex Inkeles, "National Character and Modern Political Systems," quoted in Nelson W. Polsby, *et al.*, eds., *Politics and Social Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963), p. 173.

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this study, it is clear that the historical memory of the Armenian people is replete with persistent sufferings and sometime heinous experiences, particularly in the last 1500 years of Armenian history. One can identify a number of national character traits or cultural patterns which sprang from the very nature of collective historical experience. Thus, centuries of persecution and servitude produced a people suffering from the worst forms of collective and personal paranoia, perhaps unmatched in the annals of ethnic history save by that of the Jews. In this context, such character traits as deep mutual mistrust, cynicism, and vengefulness became a part of the Armenians' psyche. Moreover, lacking a tradition of independent existence and self-rule, the Armenians could not readily develop political consciousness, maturity, and discipline, despite their phenomenal sense of nationalism which even predated that of the European nation-state.

Coexistent with these negative character traits were the goodness, faith, and love that the Holy Armenian Church provided in generous measure. The Church's teachings were an antidote intended to neutralize the negative traits bred by the Armenians' hostile environment. As stressed previously in the present study, the Church was the sole "haven for the Armenian soul,"[1] which beyond its healing role acted to moderate the underlying disruptive psychological traits which often bordered on personal masochism and group nihilism.

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[1] From a poem by the celebrated Armenian Poet, Vahan T'ēk'eian, "Egeghets'in Haygagan" ("The Armenian Church").

2. Cultural Shock

Our historical account of the early years of Armenian settlement shows that the Church soon became forcefully drawn to the center stage of troubled community life. But the crisis that beset Church and community did not solely spring from negative traits of national character, but also from the "cultural shock" experienced by most immigrants who had transplanted themselves into a milieu radically different from their land of birth. The sudden freedom after age-old captivity, no less than the modernized culture and mores of America, were simply too disorienting socially and psychologically. In today's terminology these poor immigrants were in the midst of an identity crisis, a most disruptive phase in the growth of persons and communities, and even nations.

3. The Leadership Factor

The third cause of Church turmoil was what might be termed a "leadership crisis." To be sure, both spiritually and in the more tangible areas of education and experience, the Church leadership was unequal to the new challenge in America. The clergy, both as a group and individually, were tried and tried again in conflict after conflict, but were found wanting. The caliber of the clergy had not been generally very high; after the massacres of 1915, it deteriorated further. In view of this reality, the clergy's and the Church's traditional role as instruments of peacemaking could not be fulfilled, and the Church's spiritual mission faltered.

The accompanying Table 1 presents a background profile of what might be called the top "leadership" of the Armenian Church in the United States until 1944. Included are all the clerics who served in the positions of Primate and Locum-Tenens with certain of their background characteristics. Taken together, the Table is a collective portrait of the Church's leaders from which a number of generalizations can be deduced. Thus, a total of seventeen men served at the top of the hierarchy, two of whom (Sarajian and Giwlēsērian) served twice. These seventeen men served over a period of fifty-five years, or on the average 3.2 years. Without counting Bishop Diran's ten years, only two clerics served more than five years and ten served less than two years. Clearly, tenure at the top was unstable. Given the brief tenures there could be little time for efficient planning and rational administration. The fact that only six of these men were full-fledged primates also points to crisis at the top.

In terms of crisis and hierarchical affiliation, the group was not too homogeneous. Half of the sixteen clerics

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TABLE 1
LEADERS OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
(1889-1944)

Name of Primate/ Locum-Tenens [Dates of Office]	Origin Birthplace Date	Hierarchical Affiliation	Education, Level and Place	Personality Traits	Disposition
Hovsēp' Sarajian (Father) L.T. [1889-1893]	Constantinople 1849	Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin	St. James Seminary	Inspirational Humble	Primate of United States
Maghak'ia Dērounian (Father) L.T. [1894-1897]	Diarbekir, Turkey	Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin	-	Cautious Bureaucratic	Bishop in Turkey
Masht'ots' P'ap'azian (Father) L.T. [1897-1898]	Van, Turkey	Constantinople	Armash Seminary	Vindictive Proud Intellectual	Defrocked
Hovsēp' Sarajian (Bishop) P. [1898-1906]		same as above			Primate of Van, Turkey
Bōghos Kaft'anian (Father) L.T. [1906-1908]	Constantinople 1863	Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin	Armenian Catholic Mekhitarists Monastery, Venice Author	Dogmatic Controversial	Defrocked

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TABLE 1--Continued

Name of Primate/ Locum-Tenens [Dates of Office]	Origin Birthplace Date	Hierarchical Affiliation	Education, Level and Place	Personality Traits	Disposition
Eznig Abahouni (Archbishop) P. [Sept. 1908-Oct. 1908]	Constantinople	Ēchmiadzin		Courageous Revolutionary	Bishop in Turkey
Moushegh Seropian (Bishop) L.T. [Feb. 1911]	Nicomidia, Turkey 1869	Cilicia	Armash Seminary	Administrative ability, controversial dynamic Intellectual Author	Defrocked
Arsēn Vehouni (Father) P. [1913-1917]	Constantinople	Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin		Controversial Humble	Retired
Papkēn Giwlēsērian (Bishop) L.T. [April-July 1917]	Ainteb, Turkey 1868	Constantinople and Cilicia	Armash Seminary	Administrative ability, author, Scholar, Intellect	Loc. Ten. in America

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TABLE 1--Continued

Name of Primate/ Locum-Tenens [Dates of Office]	Origin Birthplace Date	Hierarchical Affiliation	Education, Level and Place	Personality Traits	Disposition
Shahē Kasbarian (Father) L.T. [1917-1920]	Ainteb, Turkey 1882	Constantinople and Cilicia	Armash Sem. and Episcopal Theol. Sem. Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.	Controversial Humble	Dean of Antelias Sem. (Cilicia)
Papkēn Giwlēsērian (Bishop) L.T. [1920-1921]		same as above			Catholicos of Cilicia
Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian (Archbishop) P. [1921-1928]	Norshen, Armenia (Russia) 1867	Ēchmiadzin	Kēorkian Sem. Petrograd Univ. Russia	Extreme Traditionalist, distinguished scholar-author	Retired
Serovpē Nershabouh (Father) L.T. [1928-1930]	Constantinople	Constantinople		Controversial Passive	Died in Office
Horout'iwn Sarkisian (Father) L.T. [1930-1931]	Sewerēg, Turkey 1867	Jerusalem	Jerusalem Seminary	Compassionate, modest means	Died in Office

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TABLE 1--Continued

Name of Primate/ Locum-Tenens [Dates of Office]	Origin Birthplace Date	Hierarchical Affiliation	Education, Level and Place	Personality Traits	Disposition
Ghewont Tourian (Archbishop) P. [1931-1933]	(Scutari) Constantinople 1881	Constantinople and Ēchmiadzin	Armash Seminary	Administrative ability, scholar controversial	Assassinated
Mamprē Kalfaian (Archbishop) L.T. [1933-1939]	Smyrna, Turkey 1893	Jerusalem	Freres Mariste School Smyrna, Jerusalem Sem.	Kind, generous and wealthy.	Primate of United States 1954-1958
Sion Manougian (Father) L.T. [March-May 1939]	Giwrmashēn, Turkey	Jerusalem	St. James Seminary	Humble Conservative Ascetic	Primate of United States 1958-1966
Karekin Hovsēp'ian (Archbishop) L.T. [1939-1943]	Artzakh (Armenia) Russia 1866	Ēchmiadzin	Kēorkian Sem. Berlin Univ. (Ph.D.)	Scholar, author administrative ability charismatic	Catholicos of Cilicia
Diran Nersoyian (Bishop) P. [1944-1954]	Ainteb, Turkey 1904	Jerusalem/ Ēchmiadzin	Jerusalem Sem. and London Univ.	Author, scholar teacher, reformer controversial	Patriarch of Jerusalem 1957-1958 Dean of St. Nersēs Sem. U.S.A.

came from provincial-rural areas while the remainder had urban-big city origins. More significantly, only two of the sixteen were Russian Armenians, while fourteen were form the Ottoman Empire. Among the latter, seven were from Constantinople, thus reflecting the centrality of the Ottoman capital in Armenian church life. This fact becomes more obvious when it is noticed that the immediate hierarchical affiliation of nine clerics was the Constantinople Patriarchate.

The remaining background characteristics--education, personality, political affiliation, and disposition--are related to the quality of church leadership as provided by the Primates and Locum-Tenentes. In terms of education, most of the group had had little more than a seminary-level education, mostly at the Armash Seminary, Turkey, the St. James Seminary in Jerusalem, or the Kēorkian Seminary in Ēchmiadzin, Russia. Only four clerics possessed European-type higher education beyond that of their native seminaries--Archbishops Der Hovhannēsian and Hovsēp'ian, who held post-graduate degrees from Russian and German universities, respectively. Bishop Kasbarian had graduated from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The rest, with the exception of Archbishops Seropian, Giwlēsērian, and Nersoyian simply were not equipped educationally to serve properly the Diocese of the United States. Also many of their specializations in school were not relevant to their complex and difficult mission in America.

The shortcomings in education were compounded by some of their personality traits which included traditionalism, controversiality, vindictiveness, pride and stubbornness, which harmed their efforts and detracted from their spiritual and administrative effectiveness. Of course, there were those whose character traits were of a high order--e.g., humility, courage, dynamism, administrative ability, compassion, scholarship, etc. Yet not many of these positive traits occurred together in one individual. All considered, in terms of both character and education, Archbishop Hovsēp'ian stood higher than the other clergymen, to be followed by Archbishops Seropian, Giwlēsērian and Nersoyian. The others were not well-suited in education and temperament for service in the United States. It is noteworthy that in the "dispositon" category, we find both Giwlēsērian and Hovsēp'ian reached the second highest position in the Church hierarchy--the Catholicate of Cilicia. Archbishop Nersoyian became briefly Patriarch of Jerusalem and later head of St. Nersēs Seminary. Of the rest, one (Tourian) was assassinated, three were defrocked, and many retired or died in office.

4. Politicization of Community Life

The fourth cause of instability in the Church was the politicization of Armenian life. The re-awakening of Armenian national consciousness under European intellectual influences had given rise to the Armenian revolutionary movements and parties. In time the conflict between the different parties began to disturb the peace of the Armenian communities, and especially the peace of the Church. In America, however, serious inter-party conflict came early but was intensified subsequent to the sovietization of Armenia in 1920. The latter even politicized the Church and the community as never before, thus increasing conflict and bringing the Church establishment to the edge of chaos during the thirties. This unfortunate politicization occurred for two reasons: (1) the nature of Communist ideology and Soviet rule which almost automatically led to the ideological polarization of the Armenian Church and community in the dispersion; and (2) the anti-Soviet policies of the Tashnag Party which, having lost power to the Soviets in Armenia, aimed to build an alternate base of power in the dispersion. In contrast to the period 1888 to 1944, the history of the Armenian Church in the United States since World War II has been relatively peaceful. At least the factions in the community are able to learn to pursue their conflicting interests within the established norms of civility. In other words, there have been no disruptive or cataclysmic incidents similar to Archbishop Tourian's murder.

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5. The Confusion of National Destiny and Christian Mission

Political interference in the life of the Church was only one aspect of the general confusion between the Church's primary spiritual mission and her subordinate activities concerning the destiny of the Armenian nation. Despite efforts by the Church leadership, no significant success was achieved in dealing creatively with this problem which continues to be a potent source of crisis. Often the Church was obliged to play a secular role which diverted her from her spiritual mission.

Although serving a nationalist cause could make the Church an instrument of ethnic "ego-tripping" and hamper the religious mission of the Armenian Church, conversely the blind indifference of some clergymen to the need of American-Armenians to identify with their culture would have been the height of folly since such a policy might have meant the disappearance of the Church in the United States. There were nevertheless some innovative clergymen who utilized the ethnic-cultural propensities of the people to enhance the Church's spiritual mission. In other words, if the road to an Armenian's heart passed through his ethnic-self so be it.

Ultimately, one must accept the reality that ethnic and political issues always took priority in Church matters. Indeed, the climate at no time was so established as to censure, condemn, or even restrain such political and ethnic activities which obstructed or obscured her spiritual mission.

6. Jurisdictional Conflicts and Hierarchical Centers

The jurisdictional rivalries among the Church's four hierarchical centers were another primary cause of crisis. It is important to note the successive transfer of authority over the Armenian flock in America from one hierarchical center to another. For example, the initial authority to establish the American spiritual pastorate came from Constantinople, but the decision to establish a diocese came from the Holy See in Ēchmiadzin. Nevertheless, the influence of Constantinople on diocesan affairs was unrivalled until 1915; only after 1920 could the Holy See of Ēchmiadzin make its influence felt in the United States. With the removal of the Cilician Catholicate from Sis in Turkey to Antelias in Lebanon, the influence of that See increased, much to the dismay of Ēchmiadzin. The 1940s saw a cooling of the Ēchmiadzin-Antelias competition, only to usher in the influence of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in the United States. The geographical and political remoteness of Ēchmiadzin made it difficult for the authorities to evaluate properly and to expedite the problems of the Diocese in the United States. The diversity of political systems in the various countries in which the hierarchical Sees were located contributed to the inconsistency of their policies and further compounded the problem of hierarchical discipline.

7. Structural-Organizational Problems

Structural and organizational problems arose from the inadequacies of the Church constitution and by-laws. The promulgation and interpretation of the constitution and by-laws were based on Old World concepts. Simply, they did not fit the American environment. The frequency of new amendments and the lack of clarity regarding the area of authority of laymen and clergy, resulted in constitutional "nit-picking." The result was frequent confrontations between the Primate and the Central Executive Committee which was paralleled at the parish levels by conflicts between the priest and Church Trustees.

8. Geographical Dispersion of American Settlements

This was another factor contributing to the Church's difficulties. Both in terms of effective communication and efficient administration, the great distances between communities in America represented a liability to church life. For example, it was difficult to supervise Californian farmers' parishes understandingly from a base in the urbanized East Coast of the United States. It was even harder to enforce discipline over long distances. The diffusion of parishes and their relative isolation produced a diversity of local habits, traditions, and policies, and resulted in dangerous inconsistencies in their educational programs.

9. The Multiple Waves of Migration and the Attendant Instability and Lag of the Americanization Process

These factors kept the church in perpetual flux. As soon as one wave of immigrants became acculturated into American society, another wave followed. Thus, the cultural cleavage between the early settlers and later settlers produced tensions and instability. The moral, spiritual, and intellectual attitudes toward the institution of the Church varied greatly between American-born and foreign born Armenians. This incongruity was further compounded by sociologically diverse attitudes between the older and newer immigrants. The later immigrants were rudely confronted by an Armenian Church which had already undergone significant changes from the one they had left in the Old World.

10. The Persistence of Traditionalism

The persistence of traditionalism in the Armenian Church in a sea of American modernity has been and continues to be a major source of conflict for the Church. The dichotomy between traditionalism and modernity and the balancing of the two requires exceptional talent from the Church leadership. In view of her role as guardian of the Armenian culture, the Church experienced difficulty in adapting her traditional ways to the modern American ethos.

The sociological changes in American life as a result of World War II reflected on the abrupt change of direction toward a more liberal policy for the Armenian Church.

This critical account of Armenian Church history should not hide the achievements and strengths of this institution. It is to be noted the Armenian Church not only has succeeded in surviving the "foreign" American environment, but also has registered significant advances that include the preparation of a young, well-educated, and competent clergy, the increase of the scope of religious and cultural activities, and an ambitious building program--all achieved with a minimum of alteration of the Church's traditional character. Indeed there is something very remarkable about the Armenian Church as it has evolved through the centuries and as it has functioned in the American context. While she has made notable attempts to adjust to American circumstances, she has given up little of her traditional essence. She has preserved her ethnic-national character, the sacred classical language remains the main medium of worship, and her sacramental and doctrinal base remains intact. Indeed, the Church of Armenia has compromised little for her survival in the giant democratic melting pot that is the United States. Of course, reluctance to change is against the conventional wisdom of America; not only are we used to change but our environment encourages and pressures us toward rapid change. Yet the Armenian Church has not survived as long as she has by accelerated reform but by being herself--the national repository of the spiritual values of old Armenia. As one of the world's oldest religious communities alive today, her will to survive as the embodiment of the First Christian Nation appears indomitable.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

The Table of Transliteration appearing below is provided by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and has been used for all names and places transliterated from the Armenian text.

Ա	ա	a	Մ	մ	m
Բ	բ	p	Յ	յ	y
Գ	գ	k	Ն	ն	n
Դ	դ	t	Շ	շ	sh
Ե	ե	e	Ո	ո	o
Զ	զ	z	Չ	չ	ch'
Է	է	ē	Պ	պ	b
Ը	ը	e	Ջ	ջ	ch
Թ	թ	t'	Ռ	ռ	rh
Ժ	ժ	zh	Ս	ս	s
Ի	ի	i	Վ	վ	v
Լ	լ	l	Տ	տ	d
Խ	խ	kh	Ր	ր	r
Ծ	ծ	dz	Ց	ց	ts'
Կ	կ	g	Ւ	ւ	w
Հ	հ	h	Փ	փ	p'
Ձ	ձ	ts	Ք	ք	k'
Ղ	ղ	gh	Օ	օ	ō
Ճ	ճ	j	Ֆ	ֆ	f

APPENDIX II

LIST OF CHURCHES IN ORDER OF THEIR CONSECRATION

NUMBER	Date	Name	Place	Primate or Locum-Tenens
1	January 5, 1891	Church of Our Saviour	Worcester, Massachusetts	Fr. Hovsēp' Sarajian
2	June 6, 1897	Holy Translators	Providence, Rhode Island	Fr. Vaghinag Sisagian
3	April 1, 1900	St. John Chrysostom	New York, New York	Fr. Hovsēp' Sarajian
4	October 14, 1900	Holy Trinity	Fresno, California	Fr. Hovsēp' Sarajian
5	January 27, 1907	Holy Cross	Union City (West Hoboken), New Jersey	Fr. Bōghos Kaft'anian
6	April 17, 1910	Saint Gregory	Fowler, California	Fr. Bōghos Kaft'anian
7	July 6, 1911	Saint Mary	Yettem, California	Fr. Bōghos Kaft'anian
8	April 16, 1916	Saint Vartanants'	Lowell, Massachusetts	Fr. Arsēn Vehouni
9	July, 1916	Saint Peter's	Troy, New York	Fr. Arsēn Vehouni

Appendix II continued

NUMBER	Date	Name	Place	Primate or Locum-Tenens
10	September 30, 1917	Saint Sahag and Saint Mesrob	West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Fr. Arsēn Vehouni
11	1923	Holy Cross	Los Angeles, California	Archbishop Dirary Dēr Hovhannēsian
12	November 11, 1923	Holy Trinity	Boston, Massachusetts	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
13	October 3, 1924	Holy Resurrection	South Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Archbishop Dirary Dēr Hovhannēsian
14	November 23, 1924	Saint Sahag and Mesrob	Reedley, California	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
15	December 25, 1925	Saint Mesrob Church	Racine, Wisconsin	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
16	February 20, 1926	Saint Gregory the Illuminator	Chicago, Illinois	Archbishop Dirary Dēr Hovhannēsian
17	April 1, 1928	Saint Gregory the Illuminator	North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Archbishop Dirary Dēr Hovhannēsian
18	May 23, 1929	Holy Trinity	Brooklyn, New York	Fr. Serovpē Nershabouh

Appendix II continued

NUMBER	Date	Name	Place	Primate or Locum-Tenens
19	April 6, 1930	Saint Gregory the Illuminator	Binghamton, New York	Fr. Serovpē Nershabouh
20	Nov. 30, 1930	Saint Gregory the Illuminator	St. Catherine's Ontario, Canada	Fr. Harout'iwn Sarkisian
21	June 14, 1931	Holy Ascension	Bridgeport, Connecticut	Archbishop Ghewont Tourian
22	Nov. 22, 1931	Saint John the Baptist	Detroit, Michigan	Archbishop Ghewont Tourian
23	June 21, 1936	Holy Cross	Lawrence, Massachusetts	Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian
24	Oct. 31, 1937	Saint James	Watertown, Massachusetts	Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian
25	May 17, 1937	Holy Cross	New York, New York	Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian
26	March 19, 1941	Holy Resurrection	New Britain, Connecticut	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian
27	Oct. 4, 1941	Saint Leon's	Paterson, New Jersey	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian
28	May 11, 1942	Saint John's	West Allis, Wisconsin	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian

APPENDIX III

SITES, DATES AND PRESIDING CHURCHMEN OF DIOCESAN CONVENTIONS (1902-1944)

DATE	PLACE	PRESIDING CHURCHMEN
1902, June 12	Worcester	Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian
1906, Sep. 2	Worcester	Father Bōghos Kaft'anian
1907, May 30	Worcester	Archbishop Hovsēp' Sarajian
1910, Feb. 22	West Hoboken	Father Bōghos Kaft'anian
1911, Feb. 26	Worcester	Bishop Moushegh Seropian
1911, Nov. 12	Worcester	Father Bōghos Shahnazarian
1912, July 7	Worcester	Father Arsēn Vehouni
1913, Sep. 20	Worcester	Archbishop Kēork Iwt'iwjian
1914, Nov. 26-27	Worcester	Father Arsēn Vehouni
1916, Oct. 29-31	Worcester	Father Arsēn Vehouni
1917, Feb. 18	Worcester	Father Arsēn Vehouni
1917, July 29	Worcester	Bishop Papkēn Giwlēsērian
1918, Apr. 7- 8	Worcester	Father Shahē Kasbarian
1920, July 10	Worcester	Bishop Khorēn Mouradpēgian
1921, Aug. 21	Worcester	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
1923, Oct. 23	Boston	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
1925, Sep. 6-7	Boston	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
1926, June 20	Boston	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian

Appendix III continued

DATE	PLACE	PRESIDING CHURCHMEN
1927, May 15-16	Boston	Archbishop Dirayr Dēr Hovhannēsian
1928, Oct. 7- 8	New York	Father Serovpē Nershabouh
1930, Sep. 6- 7	New York	Father Harout'iwn Sarkisian
1931, Jan. 31- Feb. 1	New York	Father Nshan P'ap'azian
1931, Oct. 10-11	New York	Archbishop Ghewont Tourian
1933, Sep. 2- 3	New York	Archbishop Ghewont Tourian
1936, Oct. 10-11	New York	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian
1937, May 1- 2	New York	Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian
1938, Sep. 3- 4	New York	Archbishop Mamprē Kalfaian
1939, Apr. 16	New York	Father Sion Manougian
1940, Sep. 21-22	New York	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian
1941, Sep. 27-28	New York	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian
1942, Nov. 7- 8	Providence	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian
1943, Oct. 2- 3	Worcester	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian
1944, Jan. 29-30	New York	Archbishop Karekin Hovsēp'ian

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	February 18, 1917
	July 29, 1917
	April 7-8, 1918
	August 21, 1921
Boston, Massachusetts	September 6-7, 1925
	May 15-16, 1927
	October 7-8, 1928
New York, New York	January 31-February 1,1931
	October 10-11, 1931
	January 21-22, 1933
	September 2-3, 1933
	October 10-11, 1936
	May 1-2, 1937
	September 3-4, 1938
	April 16, 1939

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	September 27-28, 1941
Providence, Rhode Island	November 7-8, 1942
Worcester, Massachusetts	October 2-3, 1943
New York, New York	January 29-30, 1944

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a history of the Armenian Church in the United States from 1888 to 1944. It is mainly based on original sources drawn from government documents, Diocesan and parish records, books, community newspapers, letters, diaries, pamphlets and personal accounts of various leaders and participants. The methodology used was historical, descriptive and critical.

Not until the 1880s did Armenians come in significant numbers to settle in America. The primary cause of Armenian immigration was the political-religious persecutions at the hands of the Turks from 1894 to 1896; and again in 1909 and 1915. Economic factors also played a substantial part in motivating migration. The Church became the core of community life in America because she alone embodied everything Armenian. She preserved the national heritage from being lost in the American "melting pot." The immigrants considered the Church the soul of the Armenian nation and the citadel of Armenian spirit. Their first church was built in Worcester, Massachusetss in 1891, and in 1898 the Diocese of the Armenian Church was formally established.

The dissertation pursues a chronological description of the development of the Church to 1944 with particular

emphasis on the issues and personalities involved in church life as well as on exterior factors that influenced the Church. Such factors included the Armenian political parties, immigration patterns and the short independence of Armenia followed by its sovietization. Though the Church experienced notable successes, there were also periods of protracted crisis. This recurrence of crisis is ascribed to a number of factors. These were:

1. The Armenian national character with its individualistic and sometimes paranoiac aspects.

2. The deep cultural shock experience as a result of immigration.

3. A pervasive leadership crisis among all levels of clergy.

4. The politicization of Church and community.

5. The confusion of Armenian national destiny with the Church's Christian mission.

6. The jurisdictional conflict between the four Armenian hierarchical centers.

7. Structural difficulties arising from inadequacies in the Church constitutions and by-laws.

8. Geographical diffuseness of the parishes in America.

9. The multiple waves of migrations and the attendant instability and slowness of the Americanization process.

10. The persistence of traditionalism in the Armenian Church.

This critical account of Armenian Church history should not hide the achievements and strengths of this institution. It is to be noted that the Armenian Church not only has succeeded in surviving in the "foreign" American environment, but also has registered significant advances that include the preparation of a young, well-educated, and competent clergy, the increase of the scope of religious and cultural activities, and an ambitious building program. While the Church has made notable attempts to adjust to American circumstances, she has given up little of her traditional essence. She has preserved her ethnic-national character. The sacred classical language remains the main medium of worship. Her sacramental and doctrinal base remains intact. Of course, reluctance to change is against the conventional wisdom of America. Yet the Armenian Church has not survived as long as she has by accelerated "reform" or acculturation, but by being herself--the national repository of the spiritual values of old Armenia. Her will to survive as the embodiment of the "First Christian Nation" appears indomitable.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Oshagan Minassian was born on August 22, 1930, in Aleppo, Syria, to Karnig and Sirvart Minassian. He completed his elementary and secondary education at the Haygazian School in Aleppo. He entered Armenian Theological Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon, in 1944. In 1951 he completed his theological studies and was ordained a celibate priest at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. He taught Liturgical Music and History at the Seminary from 1951 to 1953, whereupon he was sent to the United States. In 1953 he was assigned as pastor of the Holy Cross Armenian Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He terminated his pastorate at Holy Cross in 1955 because of a spinal injury.

Father Minassian entered Boston University School of Theology in 1960 in pursuit of a Masters Degree in Religious Education, which he received in 1962. Continuing his studies he directed his work in the area of Church History in pursuit of his doctorate in Theology. In addition to his research and teaching of religious hymnology in the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Father Minassian has also organized and developed the Erevan Choral Society, specializing in the interpretation of contemporary Armenian music.